The Goths AD 200–700

RAFFAELE D'AMATO
& ANDREA SALIMBETI

ILLUSTRATED BY MAREK SZYSZKO

Elite • 261

The Goths, AD 200–700

RAFFAELE D'AMATO & ANDREA SALIMBETI

ILLUSTRATED BY MAREK SZYSZKO

Series editors Martin Windrow & Nick Reynolds

Dedication

Dedicated to Volker Bierbrauer, ‘Father’ of the Goths and Lombards.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SELECT CHRONOLOGY

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

1st–4th centuries AD: Wielbark & Chernyakov cultures ■ The Goths in Crimea (5th–8th centuries) ■ The Visigoths, from the Balkans to Rome (4th–5th centuries) ■ The Ostrogoths, from the Balkans to Italy (5th century) ■ The Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy (489–552) ■ The Visigothic kingdom in France & Spain (418–711)

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The early period ■ The Ostrogoths ■ The Ostrogothic kingdom ■ The Visigothic kingdom ■ Goths in Roman service

ARMOUR & WEAPONS

Defensive equipment: Helmets ■ Armour ■ Shield ■ Weapons: Axes ■ Swords ■ *Saxes* & knives ■ Javelins, spears & lances ■ Bows & arrows

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Horse harness ■ Standards & trumpets ■ Siege equipment ■ Naval equipment

APPEARANCE

Physique ■ Clothing: Caps, tunics & trousers ■ Cloaks ■ Belts

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

THE GOTHS, AD 200–700

INTRODUCTION

There are no ‘Dark Ages’ people who shaped wider areas of Europe than the Goths. The obscure prehistory of these Germanic ethnic groups brought them, by the mid-2nd century AD, into what is now northern Poland. Over the next century or so, many of them then migrated south and east to their second area of expansion, the regions of present-day Volhynia, Ukraine, Moldova and Romania north and west of the Black Sea. In this chronological phase they confronted Rome for the first time, and also divided into two major groups on either side of the Dniester river: the western *Tervingi* or Visigoths, and the eastern *Greutungi* or Ostrogoths, both of them gradually approaching the Roman frontier on the Danube.

Three-quarter front view of an East Roman *Bandenhelm* found in the grave of a Gothic chieftain, late 5th–early 6th centuries AD. The high-domed sheet-iron bowl (measuring 19.5cm/ 7.5 ins) is reinforced with four vertical bronze (copper alloy) strips, fixed with silver rivets and meeting at the apex. The matching brow band has shallow arched cut-outs for the eyes; between them note the rivets which once fixed the now-missing nasal guard. Note also the broken attachments of the missing cheek-piece. (Ferrell Collection, photo courtesy James E. Ferrell)

During the era of mass migrations (*c.*300–700 AD) the Goths followed the usual sequence of Danubian tribal peoples: at first raiding and looting Roman territory, then providing Roman armies with mercenary contingents, and later consolidating the relationship with treaties of alliance. Settled in the free eastern borderlands of modern Germany, they were then overwhelmed by the 4th-century invasion of the Huns. Only grudgingly and partially allowed to settle in Roman territories, they were provoked to fight their way deeper into the beleaguered Empire, leading to the virtual destruction of an East Roman army at Adrianople in AD 378; to subsequent wars in Asia Minor, the Balkans and Italy; and to the ultimate sacrilege of Alaric's Visigoths' looting of Rome itself in AD 410.

Stricken Gothic warrior, from the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, 3rd century. This image differs widely from conventional representations of Celts or other barbarians in Roman art. Details corresponding with finds from the late Wielbark or early Chernyakov cultures are the sword hilt and pommel, and the hexagonal shield; note placing of the grip. (Museum of Palazzo Altems, Rome; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

Continuing military and political turmoil led to the emergence of a new Romano-Germanic Europe, with a Visigothic kingdom at first in southern Gaul and then in Spain, and an Ostrogothic realm in Italy, both being pragmatically recognized by the East Roman Empire ruled from Constantinople after the official dissolution of the Western Empire in 476. Many Germanic leaders sought Imperial recognition, and some rose to the highest levels in Roman military service. The mid-6th century Roman historian Jordanes draws a distinction between the barbarian peoples: in his interpretation, the Goths were the most advanced of these, able to successfully combine their own traditions with those of the Romans. His exemplar was the Ostrogoth Theodoric

the Great, who adapted to Roman culture and rose to be a king of both Goths and Romans.

Under the 6th-century Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565) the kingdom of the Ostrogoths fell to a Roman reconquest of Italy, but their fellow Goths in Crimea maintained their material culture as subjects and soldiers of the Eastern Empire until at least the 8th century. Meanwhile, the Visigothic elites of the Iberian Peninsula maintained their civilization until the Muslim invasion of Spain in 711.

SELECT CHRONOLOGY

1st–3rd centuries:	Goths migrate south from Scandinavia to modern Pomerania and northern Poland, then south and east to the Black Sea region. Flourishing of Wielbark and Chernyakov cultures.
AD 180–220:	First clashes, and later agreements, between Romans and Goths.
238:	During generations of Roman internal turmoil and defeats (230s–280s), first Gothic attacks on Roman territory around the Black Sea. Joint emperors Pupienus and Balbinus (r. for 99 days in 238) send general Menophilus to respond.
251:	Emperor Decius (r. 249–251) and his son are defeated and killed by Goths at Abryttus in Thrace.
269–270:	Gothic pressure forces Romans to abandon province of Dacia; major Gothic invasion sacks Greek cities. In 269 Emperor Claudius II (r. 268–271) routs Goths at Naissus in Moesia (modern Serbia), earning the honorific surname ‘Gothicus’.
291:	Roman sources give this date for separation east and west of river

	Dniester, into Ostrogoths (*Greutungi*) and Visigoths (*Tervingi*), respectively.
324:	Goths serving in army of Constantine I (r. 306/ 312–337) against rival Western Emperor Licinius.
332:	'40,000' Gothic *foederati* reportedly serving in Constantine's army (Jordanes, *Get.*, XXI, 112). (*Note*: all such numbers in ancient sources are highly questionable, but not always impossible.)
340–341:	Constantius II (r. 337–361) supports Visigoth leader Fritigern, who converts to heretical Arian Christianity rather than the Nicene faith.
365:	3,000 Gothic soldiers enlisted as *foederati* in army of Emperor Procopius (r. 365–366).
375:	Huns led by Balamir defeat the Goths. Emperor Valens (r. 365–378) grants Visigoths land in Eastern Empire, but regional governor mistreats Gothic settlers and assassinates some of their leaders.
378:	After Roman assassination of Gothic chiefs, Fritigern's Goths slaughter East Roman army at Adrianople in Thrace (Edirne, modern Turkey), killing Valens, many commanders and perhaps 10,000-plus troops.

Head of a Gothic warrior, from a 4th-century Roman porphyry sarcophagus.The conical cap, moustache and beard are clearly visible. (Victoria & Albert Museum, London; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

379–382:	Gothic wars of Theodosius the Great (Eastern Emperor 379–392, plus Western 392–395), who then incorporates many Goths into his army. By now, the Huns dominate territory between Baltic, Black and Caspian seas, including Gothic region in Pannonia.
386:	Gothic-majority Roman *auxilia* are prominent in defeat of Gothic leader Odotheus.
From c.392:	Theodosius's great half-Vandal general Stilicho safeguards under-age Western Emperor Honorius ruling from Ravenna.
394:	Battle of the Frigidus river (in Julian Alps, modern Slovenia); Alaric is among the Goths in Stilicho's army which defeats the usurper Eugenius.
395–397:	Alaric becomes king of Visigoths, leading attacks into Greece which

	oblige weak new Eastern Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–402) to buy him off.
401–402:	Alaric attacks Italy, but is defeated at Pollentia by Stilicho.
405–406:	Pagan Gothic chieftain Radagaisus leads invasion of Italy with *c.*20,000 warriors, but is defeated by Stilicho at Fiesole (406).
408:	Honorius, distrustfully resenting Stilicho's prestige, has him killed. Thereafter a ruling Roman clique mistreats Germanic auxiliaries, and Alaric leads a third Gothic invasion of Italy.
409–410:	Complex negotiations between rival parties delay the climax of his campaign, but in August 410 Alaric's troops enter and loot Rome. They soon withdraw, and Alaric dies of natural causes soon afterwards.

Details of the ivory Consular Dyptich of Constantius, AD 417, representing Visigothic warriors and their families captured by the future Emperor Constantius II the previous year. The caps, tunics and trousers recall those in the Faenza mosaic. Note in the second group a hexagonal shield corresponding with contemporary finds from Kerch, a quiver of arrows, and a long *scramasax* in its scabbard. (Cantatorium of Halberstadt Cathedral, Domschatz um Dom St Stephanus; photo courtesy Wikimedia commons)

416–418: Two peace treaties between the Visigoths and Romans are signed by Honorius's general F. Constantinus Felix, with king Wallia in 416 and with Theodoric I in 418 (not to be confused with later Ostrogoth leader Theodoric 'the Amal').The Visigoths are settled in Aquitania Secunda, in the Garonne valley between Toulouse and Bordeaux.

451:	Theodoric I of the Visigoths is killed, as an ally of Flavius Aetius (‘the last of the Romans’) in his defeat of Attila’s Huns at the battle of the Catalaunian Fields in modern France. (Attila dies in 453.)
453–466:	Theodoric II rules as Visigothic king in Toulouse.
454/455:	After a multi-tribal Germanic army defeats Attila’s son Ellac at Nedau, breaking the Huns’ power over central Europe, Valamir’s Ostrogoths move into liberated territory in Pannonia.
455–469:	As Roman allies, the Visigoths invade and conquer Spain, defeating the long-settled Suebi in the north-west, and capturing Mérida (456), Santarém (460) and Lisbon (469).
469–476:	Euric, king of the Visigoths, conquers much of modern southern France. Establishment of Visigothic kingdom in Spain (475).
476:	The last nominal Roman Emperor in the West, the boy Romulus Augustulus, is formally deposed in Ravenna by the Germanic *magister militum* Odoacer, who thereafter governs Italy ostensibly on behalf of the Eastern Emperor, Zeno (r. 474–491).
477:	Visigoth attempt to invade Italy is defeated by Odoacer. A treaty, guaranteed by Constantinople, divides much of the former Western Empire

	between Odoacer in Italy and Euric in Spain and Provence.
482–486:	Ostrogoth king Theodoric ‘the Amal’, from Pannonia, raids and seizes territory in Macedonia, Thessaly and Thrace**.**
488:	Theodoric is sent to take Italy in name of Zeno. After a battle against Gepids on the river Ulca (*Pan.,*VII) in winter 488, he enters Italy via Dalmatia and the Julian Alps (August 489).
489–490:	Theodoric, with an army of at least 10,000, defeats Odoacer’s forces of Herulii, Turcilingii, Rugii and Scirii at the battles of Sontius (*Anon. Val*., 11.50), Verona (27–30 September, 489; *Pan.,*VIII,39) and the Adda river. Theodoric besieges Odoacer in Ravenna. Burgundian king Gundobad, former *magister militum* in Italy, invades Liguria with strong army, devastating the land and carrying off many captives (*V. Epiph.,* 138–178; pp. 101–106).

The seal of Alaric II, king of the Visigoths (r. 484–507). This sapphire intaglio has been mounted in a 16th-century gold ring. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. VII B 23; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

491: Failure of Odoacer's night attack on Theodoric's camp at the Pine Grove, Ravenna.

493: Odoacer is killed by Theodoric in Ravenna; foundation of Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy; Theodoric confirmed as king by the Ostrogoths, though as yet without Imperial sanction *(Anon. Val.*, 12. 57). Peace with Burgundians secured by marriage treaty and ransom of Italian captives (*V. Epiph*., 163; 37–39, p. 104).

496: Clovis, king of the Salian Franks from Gallia Belgica, besieges Visigothic

	Carcassonne (in modern Provence).
497–498:	Emperor Anastasius (r. 491–518) recognizes Theodoric as Byzantium's viceroy in Italy.
505:	Theodoric campaigns in Pannonia; his generals win battle of Horreum Margi against Gepids and Imperial troops. Roman-Frankish alliance against the Goths.
507:	Theodoric annexes the Alamannic kingdom into his realm (*Pan*., XV, 212). Franks under Clovis defeat Visigoths and kill Alaric II at Vouillé; they occupy Aquitaine, but are checked by Theodoric. Visigoths consolidate in the Iberian peninsula.
508:	Raids by Imperial fleet on southern Italy; Romans plunder city of Tarentum (Marc*., Chron* s.a.508); Theodoric tries to re-establish relations with Emperor Anastasius (Cass., *Var.,* I, 1)**.**
508–511:	Theodoric fights victorious campaigns against Burgundians. In Gaul, he annexes Visigothic Provence to his Ostrogothic kingdom, as regent for its child heir Amalaric, who is his grandson. Theodoric thus controls territories from the Bay of Biscay to the Danube, and from central France to southern Spain. He concludes a peace with the East Roman Empire (Procopius, *BG* V [XII, 45–52]).[1]

A EARLY PERIOD, 2nd–4th CENTURIES AD

(1) Warrior of the Wielbark culture, *c.*2nd century

The fighting gear of the common Gothic foot-warrior changed little over some four centuries. Such infantrymen made up the greatest proportion of any armed force, and were equipped in typically Germanic fashion: with a shield, various kinds of spear and javelin, and sidearms which might be knives, axes or swords. We have given this wealthy warrior a spear and javelins from finds including at Stawianowo and Wronki; a shield reconstructed from elements from Nowy Targ and Gronowo Gorne; and a handsome sword from Opalenie. Note also his hairstyle (a 'Suebian/ Swabian knot', from Czarnowko, grave no. 430), and the unique checkered and fringed cloak from Gronowo (burial mound 3, grave 1).

(2) Gothic chieftain in Roman service; Motha, Arabia, 208

This *praepositus* is largely based on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, and is clean-shaven in the Roman fashion. The outer tunic, decorated with *clavii,* is East Roman, and the cloak and trousers follow finds from Thorsberg. Note the 'Phrygian' cap, the Roman *spatha* sword, and the spurs which confirm his membership of the mounted elite. His heavy lance is copied from the Kovel find, and his horse harness from items found at Kamieńnczyk and Vimose.

(3) Warrior of the Chernyakhov culture, *c.*250–300

The *Scriptores Historia Augusta* describe the equipment of 3rd-century Gothic warriors as comprising shields, long swords and small spears (*scuta, spathae, lanceolae),* but the elite were already using ringmail of Roman origin (here copied from the Czaszkowo specimen, with a fastening from Dobrocin).The 4th-century remains of a wooden shield (*skildus*) from Belen'koe village of the Chernyakhov culture indicate a diameter of 80cm (31.5 ins), with a 4cm (1.58 in) edging strip. His *spatha*, spear and javelins are copied from the finds at Lepesowska.

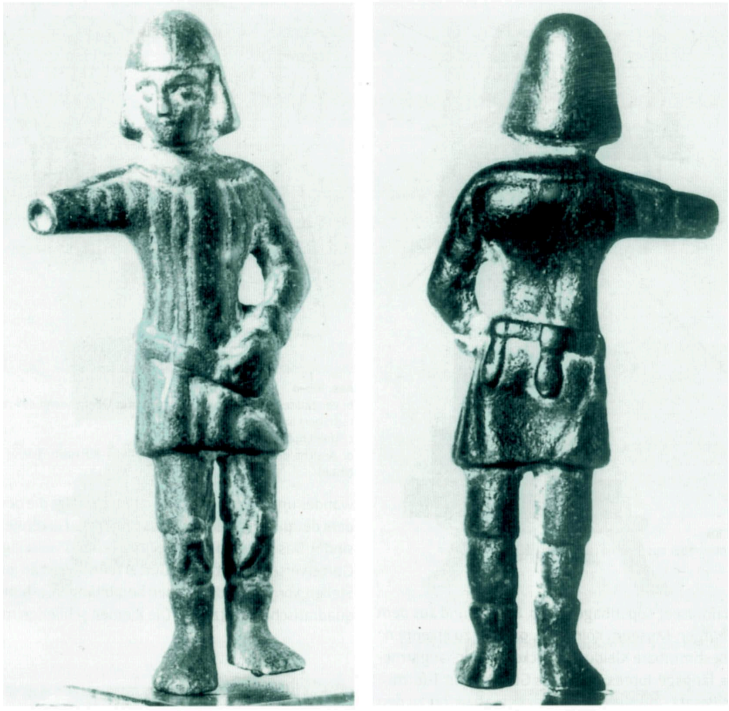
Gothic cavalryman charging Roman troops with a heavy lance, from the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, *c.*250–260 AD, which provides one of the earliest representations of Gothic warriors in Roman art. The long-sleeved tunic and long trousers accord with 3rd-century archaeological finds from Thorsberg. (Museum of Palazzo Altemps, Rome; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

Roman soldiers with Gothic prisoners (top left, bottom right), from a 3rd-century sarcophagus. This may have been that of a general who served Claudius II Gothicus, and its depictions echo SHA, *Claud.*, VIII, n.5: 'The rivers are covered over with their shields, all the banks are buried under their swords and their spears. The fields are hidden beneath their bones, no road is clear, their mighty wagon-train has been

abandoned. We have captured so many women that the victorious soldiers can take for themselves two or three apiece.' (Photo DAI; Raffaele D'Amato Collection)

526:	Death of Theodoric the Great. Ostrogoth garrisons withdrawn from Visigothic Spain and Provence.
526–533:	Amalaswintha, daughter of Theodoric, rules Italy as regent for his grandson Athalaric; Gothic victories over Gepids and Vandals; Ostrogoths reoccupy Lilybaeum (Marsala, Sicily) during a war between Romans and Vandals.
531:	New war breaks out in Gaul between Visigoths and Franks; Amalaric is defeated at Barcelona (*BG.*,V [XIII, 11–17]). Frankish and Ostrogothic borders become contiguous.
534–535:	Unsuccessful siege of Lilybaeum by Romans. After death of Athalaric, Amalaswintha marries a cousin, Theodahad/ Theodatus, who kills her (Agathias, *MH*, *Praefatio,* 13). The ensuing chaos provides a pretext for Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565) to order invasion of Ostrogothic Italy by his great general Belisarius.
535–554:	**Romano-Gothic Wars for possession of Italy**
535–540:	Belisarius conquers Sicily. When Theodatus tries to defend Calabria his army disintegrates, with several leaders changing sides. Belisarius takes Naples; Goths depose and kill Theodatus, and elect Wittiges as his

	successor. Imperial army retakes Rome (536), and Belisarius successfully defends it against a first siege lasting just over a year (537–538). Imperial troops threaten Ravenna, and capture Rimini, Milan, Bergamo, Novara, Como, Petra Pertusa and Osimo. Ravenna surrenders, and Wittiges is captured (December 539). Whole of northern Italy surrenders to Belisarius except Verona, and the north-west, where Goths under quarreling leaders Uraia and Ildibadus hold out.
540–541:	Ildibadus is declared king, and appoints his nephew Totila/ Baduila to command the Treviso garrison. Ildibadus is assassinated; his successor Eraricus tries to reach terms with Justinian, but the Goths kill him too, and proclaim Totila as king. *Baduila Rex* proves an able and inspiring commander.



Bronze statuette representing a Roman soldier, probably from Egypt or Asia Minor, 6th or 7th century. This resembles the appearance of Germanic soldiers in the iconography of the late 5th to 7th centuries: neck-length hair cut straight across, and a *zostarion* tunic gathered at the waist by a belt with pendants. (ex D'Amato, 2005)

Roman lamp representing a Gothic warrior, probably from Constantinople, late 5th to early 6th centuries. Note the *tunica manicata* decorated with embroidery across the shoulders, down the front and on the sleeves; the tight-fitting *anaxyrides* trousers; and the short-sword or dagger with a pommel shaped as a downwards crescent. The figurine shows a moustache, and neck-length hair cut straight across. (Drawing by Giorgio Albertini ex Aimone, 2022)

541–542: The Goths push back a Roman attack on Verona, and win victories at Faenza and Mugello. Totila overruns Puglia and Calabria, taking Cesena, Petra and Naples, and leaving the Romans with only some port enclaves.

544–545: Tivoli falls to the Goths, who lay siege to Rome a second time. Totila takes Piacenza, Assisi and Spoleto, and seizes supplies en route to starving Rome. The Goths kill fugitives from the city, and win a battle on the bank of the Tiber.

546: In December, Totila enters Rome and plunders the city, but leaves only a weak garrison when he marches south.

547: Belisarius retakes Rome, which Totila once again besieges. Three Gothic assaults are repelled, but the retreating Goths fortify Tivoli, and in the south they defeat the Thracian force brought over from Dalmatia by the *magister militum* Iohannes ‘the Bloody’.

548: The Goths capture Roscianus (Rossano Calabro).

549–550: After Belisarius is recalled to Constantinople, Totila’s army, encouraged by his victories in the

	south (including seaborne plundering of the Imperial rear strategic base on Sicily), besieges Rome for a third time. After a first failed assault, he offers the 3,000-strong Roman garrison, long unpaid, a choice: continue to resist, and be killed; or surrender, and be not only spared, but paid off. Gullible defenders open a gate; the Goths overrun the city, massacring the garrison and the male citizens alike, and more die in ambushes already prepared along their routes of retreat.
551:	Sardinia and Corsica are in Gothic hands, and the Gothic fleet also has bases in Dalmatia, Corcyra and Epirus. Both navies win and lose sea engagements. Gothic troops are diverted north to meet a Frankish invasion. The veteran Imperial general Narses is appointed supreme commander in Italy. Roman fleet wins decisive naval victory of Sena Gallica; Gothic siege of nearby Ancona is lifted.
552–553:	Gothic siege of Crotone fails. Narses lands in south with well-prepared army of between 20,000 and 30,000, and marches up Adriatic coast. He first defeats the Goths at Rimini, and at Taginae in July Totila is decisively defeated and killed. The last Gothic king, Teja, meets the same fate in the battle of Mons Lactarius near Naples, bringing the Ostrogothic kingdom to its end.

550–711:	**Visigothic kingdom in Iberian Peninsula**
550–551:	Visigoths attempt subjugation of Hispano-Romans in Baetica, southern Spain. Emperor Justinian sends a fleet to Malaga; Imperial troops quickly occupy most of south-east, but ensuing intermittent war will last nearly 80 years.
567:	Toledo becomes capital of Visigothic kingdom.
585:	Visigoths defeat the Suebi, who had dominated the north-west of the peninsula since early 5th century.
587:	Political unification of peninsula by Visigoths; king Reccared (r. 586–601) converts to Nicene Christianity.
588–589:	Some outlying regions rebel against conversion, with Burgundian / Frankish support, but are heavily defeated.
624–625:	Major counter-offensive against Imperial troops led by king Swinthila (r. 621–631), who captures Roman-held Carthago Spartaria (modern Cartagena).
629:	Swinthila captures last Imperial strongholds in Algarve (modern southern Portugal), completing reunification of the peninsula except for a few northern districts in Biscay and the Pyrenees.

673: Flavius Paulus leads unsuccessful northern rebellion against king Wamba (r. 672–680).

Damaged Umayyad fresco of ‘six kings’ from Qasr Amra, *c.*711–750. The almost completely destroyed figure at second left is identified as Roderic, last king of the Visigoths, but only the gilded, gem-studded apex of his helmet and part of an off-white cloak survive. The patterned and decorated clothing of other figures is still a valuable period source. (ex Musil, 1907, Vol.2, pl. XXVI)

710: Succession is disputed after death of king Witiza, whose son appeals to Muslim governor of nearby Tangier, Morocco, for help.

711: Battle of Guadalete: successful Muslim invasion leads to downfall of Visigothic kingdom.

B CRIMEA, 5th–7th CENTURIES AD

(1) Gothic elite chieftain; Kerch & Constantinople, *c.*400

Captured Gothic armours represented on surviving fragments from Theodosius's Column in Constantinople are evidence for the use of scale corselets, at least by leaders. Among the booty represented are also round, hexagonal and trapezoidal shields, resembling contemporary archaeological finds from the Bosphoran cities such as Panticapea (Kerch). Those are the sources for this hexagonal *scutum*, decorated with a *deigmaton* of the *Visi* shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and for the precious *spatha* sword. The Gothic leader wears a high-status headgear comprising a purple band worn with a gold diadem, also after a find from Kerch, and a Roman waist-sash of command over his armour. The torque and bracelets are further signs of his status. As for the fur winter cloak, Synesius mentions the Gothic leaders in Constantinople as wearing 'the skins of beasts and sheep'.

(2) Gothic *foederatus* elite cavalryman, 500–525
A Gothic chieftain's grave goods recently published by G. Spier, and today in the Ferrell Collection, belonged to a man fitted out with weapons and equipment made in Constantinople. The high-domed *Bandenhelm* is made of sheet iron reinforced with four gilded bronze (copper-alloy) vertical strips at the front, back and sides. A belt has helical decorative fittings, and the sword baldric has buckles in gold and garnet. The *spatha* has a bronze crossguard inlaid with cloisonné, and the scabbard is entirely covered with gold sheet. The grave also contained a folding *sella* (camp stool) in silver and iron, composed of two rectangular iron frames pivoted together to form an X-shape, terminating in lion's heads. The banded decoration of the clothing is from a contemporary statuette in the Wyvern collection, and fabrics from Egypt.

(3) Romano-Gothic officer; Eski-Kermen, 6th–7th centuries
This cave-town and fort in southern Crimea was occupied by Gothic troops. The lamellar helmet and body armour have been reconstructed after the Kerch finds, while the arm

protection is from the Apsaros fortress. The multiple belts suspending a knife and a pouch are from Crimean finds; if the sword was visible it would be of Aradac-Kölked-Corinth typology, as also found in this 'Gothia' region. Note the high saddle and, behind the separate bowcase and quiver (mentioned in the *Strategikon*), a spare second shield which is decorated with Eastern Roman appliqués similar to finds from Martinovka. His main weapon is the long spear (*kontárion*/ *kaballarikón*), with a leather thong attached to the mid-point in Avar fashion, and a small pennon (*Strategikon,* VIIbis, 17).

Note

1 Procopius's work *De Bellis* ('History of the Wars') appeared as Book I, *The Persian War* (refs *BP* in this text); Books II & III, cont. *BP* & *The Vandal War (BV);* and Books IV to VIII, *The Gothic War (BG)*. The Loeb Classical Library edition is published in nine volumes, with sequential chapters I–XXXI throughout. This form of text reference indicates e.g. *Gothic War,* Book V of *De Bellis,* [Loeb edn, Ch XII, lines. 45–52].

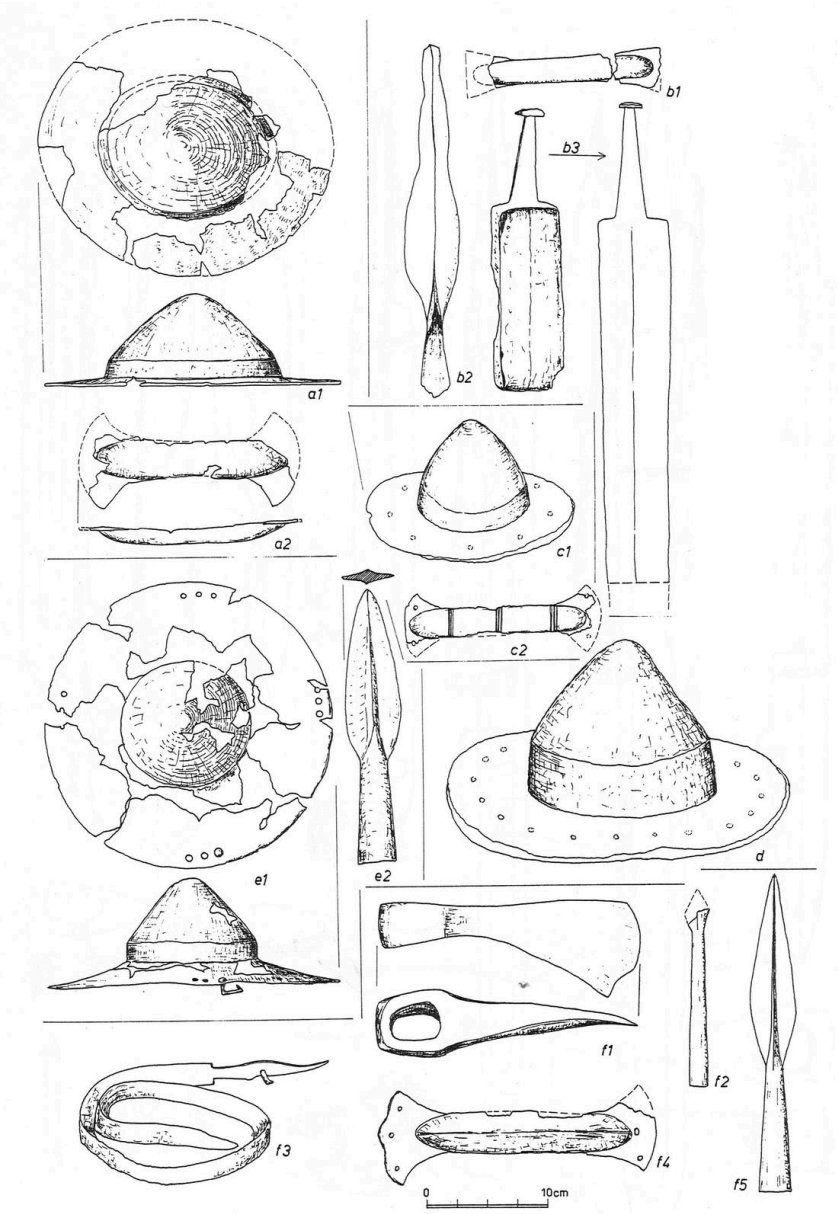
HISTORICAL SUMMARY

1st–4th centuries AD: Wielbark & Chernyakov cultures

Archaeology has identified both these two associated material cultures among the early Gothic peoples. After movement supposedly from Scandinavia led by their (mythical?) king Berig, by the 1st century AD the Goths inhabited part of modern Poland. There the so-called Wielbark culture (also embracing other Germanic peoples, such as the Gepids) was located in modern Pomerania and northern Poland, on the Baltic coast and along the lower Vistula. The evidence for this includes the scarce early Roman sources (Tacitus, *Germania*, 43–44; Strabo, *Geogr*., 7.1.3). The subsequent Chernyakov culture was born of a late 2nd- to early 3rd-century movement south-eastwards into the regions north and west of the Black Sea, reported by the later Roman historian Jordanes as being led by a king named Filimer.

By the second half of the 2nd century, although the Goths were not directly involved in Rome's Marcomannic War (*c.*166–180), the Romans were conscious of 'northern peoples' pressuring the Marcomanni and Quadi (SHA, *Marcus*, XIV, 1). The Goths followed the Vistula south and crossed the Dniester onto the steppes still occupied by the Scythians, reaching the shores of the Black Sea. Artefacts and burial customs from 2nd- to 3rd-century sites are typical of late Wielbark culture, but spread over a much larger area: from northern Greater Poland and Masovia east of the Vistula (*c.*AD 160 to 210/220), along the Vistula, San and Bug rivers into Belarus, Volhynia and northern Ukraine (*c.*180–220/230 or slightly later). This large-scale south-eastern expansion was soon followed by the birth of the Chernyakov culture in large parts of Ukraine and Romania. Literary sources report the presence of Goths in those regions and periods, and

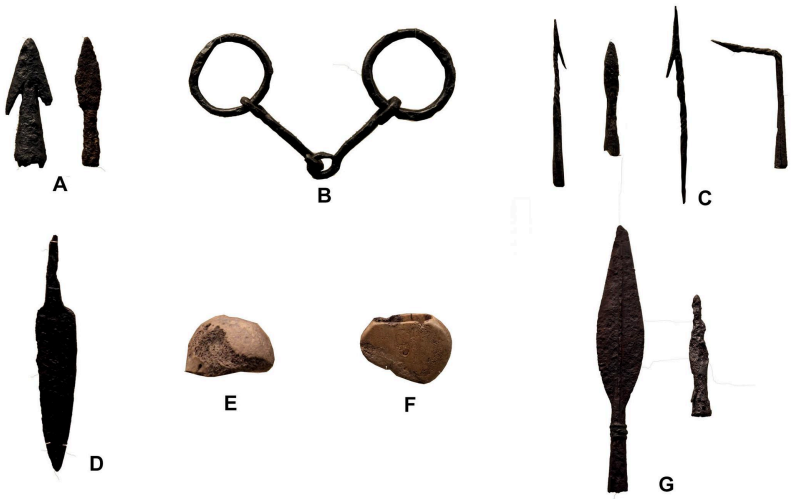
archaeology suggests their close association with both the above-named cultures.



Gothic shield bosses and grips, and remains of spears, swords and axes, from the Chernyakhov culture, 3rd–4th centuries. They were recovered from burials at Tirgsor, Oselivska (sword of Biborski VII type), Malaesty, Mogoçani and Kompanijci. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex-Kakowski)

The migration southwards was motivated by the search for more fertile lands and wider trade, spurred by the desire for conquest among this numerically strong and warlike people. The 3rd-century sources tell us of the first clashes with the Romans on the northern and eastern borders of Roman Dacia (Volhynia and northern Ukraine), and then of

numerous raids against the Graeco-Roman cities on the Black Sea. The first Gothic incursion over the Empire's borders began in 238–239 when the city of Histria, at the mouth of the Danube, was looted. Under a subsequent truce, the Romans would pay subsidies in exchange for military service, and Goths probably participated in the Persian campaign of Gordian III in 243–244.



Gothic weaponry of the Chernyakhov culture, 3rd–4th centuries, from Russia (**A–F** from Lepesovska, Khmelnytskyi Region; **G** from Vladimir Region). **A**: Iron spearheads (inv. nos.2701–165,167). **B**: Iron horse bit (inv. no.2701–162); **C**: Iron arrowheads (inv.nos.2701–166,168–170,187). **D**: Iron knife (inv. no.2701–163). **E & F**: Parts of bone sword pommel, (inv. no.2701–96) & horn scabbard chape (inv. no. 2701–85). **G**: 3rd-century spearhead, iron and bronze (inv.no.2968–1). (Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg; photos Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

In 248–251, after the Emperor Philip the Arab (r. 244–249) cut subsidies, the Goths presented a growing threat when their king Cniva led incursions beyond the Carpathians and later into Pontus. According to the SHA, in 268 they led major barbarian invasions, involving '320,000' men, 2,000 ships and many 'carriages' (*carraginem tanta*) or wagons. Land attacks on several cities were repelled, although a fleet from the northern Black Sea forced the Dardanelles and penetrated the Aegean. The first wave was defeated by the Emperor Gallienus (r. 260–268) in 268, and the second, with great slaughter, by Claudius II ('Gothicus', r. 268–270) at Naissus (Niš, Serbia) in 269. A further thrust across the Danube occurred in 270, but was defeated in 271 when Aurelian (r. 270–275) launched a counterattack north of the river and defeated the Gothic king Cannabaude (SHA, *Aur.*, XXII. 2). The

years 276–277 saw further maritime incursions, with Pontus looted and Goths infiltrating Galatia and Cilicia.

Romano-Gothic *spatha,* from Kerch (crypt 24), Crimea, *c.*AD 400. This double-edged sword measuring 97cm/ 38 ins long has cloisonné inlays on the hilt and scabbard. Such burials of Gothic aristocrats often yield swords and brooches with gold and garnet decoration suggesting Byzantine manufacture, but also some items showing Germanic and Hunnic influence. (Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg; photos Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

According to Ammianus, the height of their 4th-century migrations saw the Goths dominating territories extending from the Danube to the Don, divided into at least six separate kingdoms. The Roman frontier

on the Danube marked their south-western border, and Ammianus tells us that the Tanaites, a Don people of Alan lineage, were their eastern neighbours. According to Jordanes, from *c.*320 to *c.*370 the Gothic tribes – already divided into Visigoths and Ostrogoths – were dominant north of the Empire's lower Danube frontier. Between 332 and 365, contingents of perhaps 3,000 Gothic warriors marched by agreement through Asia Minor to take part in Rome's wars against Persia.

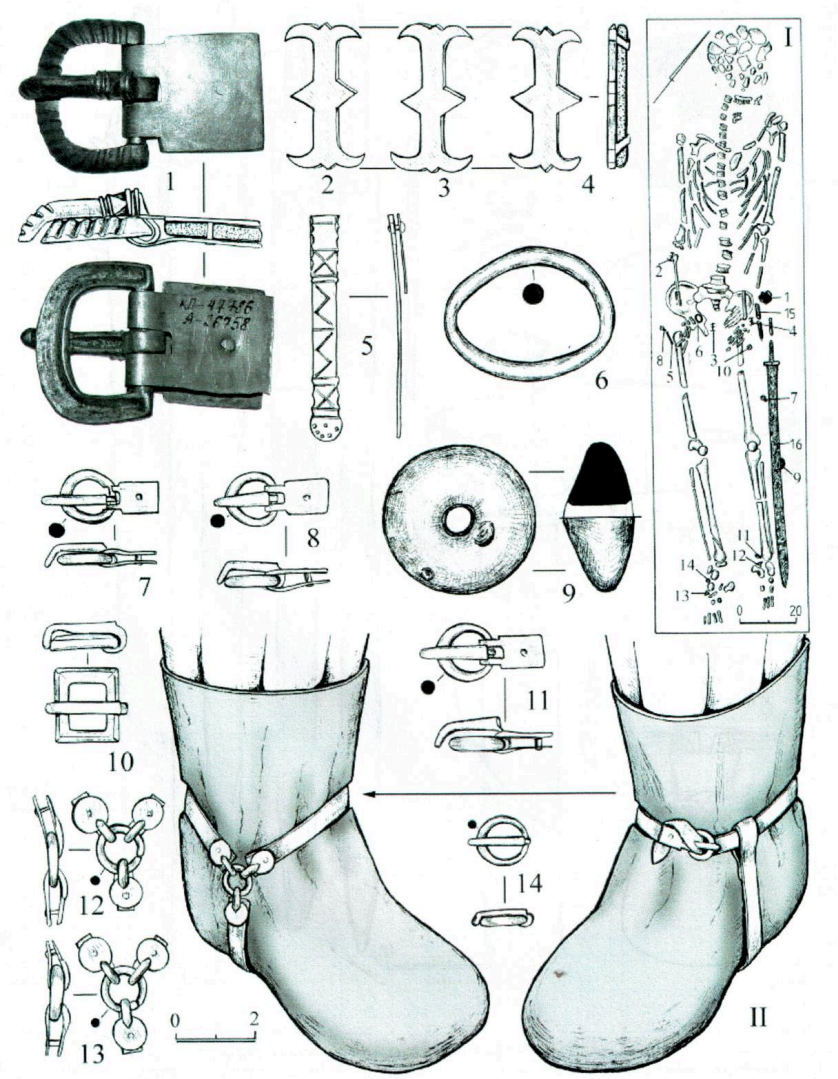
However, between *c.*370 and 425 a new power, the Huns, fragmented the Gothic world. These non-Germanic nomads from the north and east pushed a series of Gothic and other Germanic groups across the Roman frontiers, and began to expand their own power in a loose group of kingdoms north of the Danube.

The Goths in Crimea (5th–8th centuries)

Goths had first settled in northern Crimea in about AD 250, leaving the Bosphoran kingdom ruling south of the mountains. From the beginning of the 5th century the Huns arrived on the adjacent steppe and the Kerch peninsula. Roman emperors reacted by engaging many Germanic tribes as *foederati* (formal allies), and elements of the Gothic aristocracy may be associated with rich 4th- to early 5th-century burials (e.g. the Kerch Necropolis). These have yielded weapons, jewels, belt fittings and horse harness which were probably Roman gifts from Constantinople. In 2009, in south-west Crimea, a 3rd–5th century necropolis was found at a burial ground called Suvlu-Kaya. A significant number of undisturbed burials revealed items of particular interest, associated with Late Roman, Germanic and Hunnic cultures, though the later 5th-century finds lack the earlier Imperial glamour.

In 520–530, under the emperors Justin and Justinian, the Bosphoran kingdom was once again under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire. In 527–528 Justinian sent a contingent of Roman soldiers recruited from the Danube, commanded by the Tribune of Dalmatia, to garrison the cities of the Bosphorus, and these were followed by a force with an auxiliary Gothic contingent under the command of Godila and Baduri of Odissopolis (in modern Bulgaria). The enclaves of Germanic tribes in Ciscaucasia, allied to Byzantium, guarded the approaches to Black Sea coastal cities from hostile nomads.

The Goths of Crimea were initially Arian Christians like many other Gothic peoples, but integrated into the orthodox Trinitarian (Nicene) Church in around AD 500, remaining loyal to Constantinople. Many Crimean Goths spoke Greek, and many non-Gothic Roman citizens settled in the region called ‘Gothia’. Grave goods of the 5th–6th centuries show a combination of East Roman, Germanic and local military traditions.

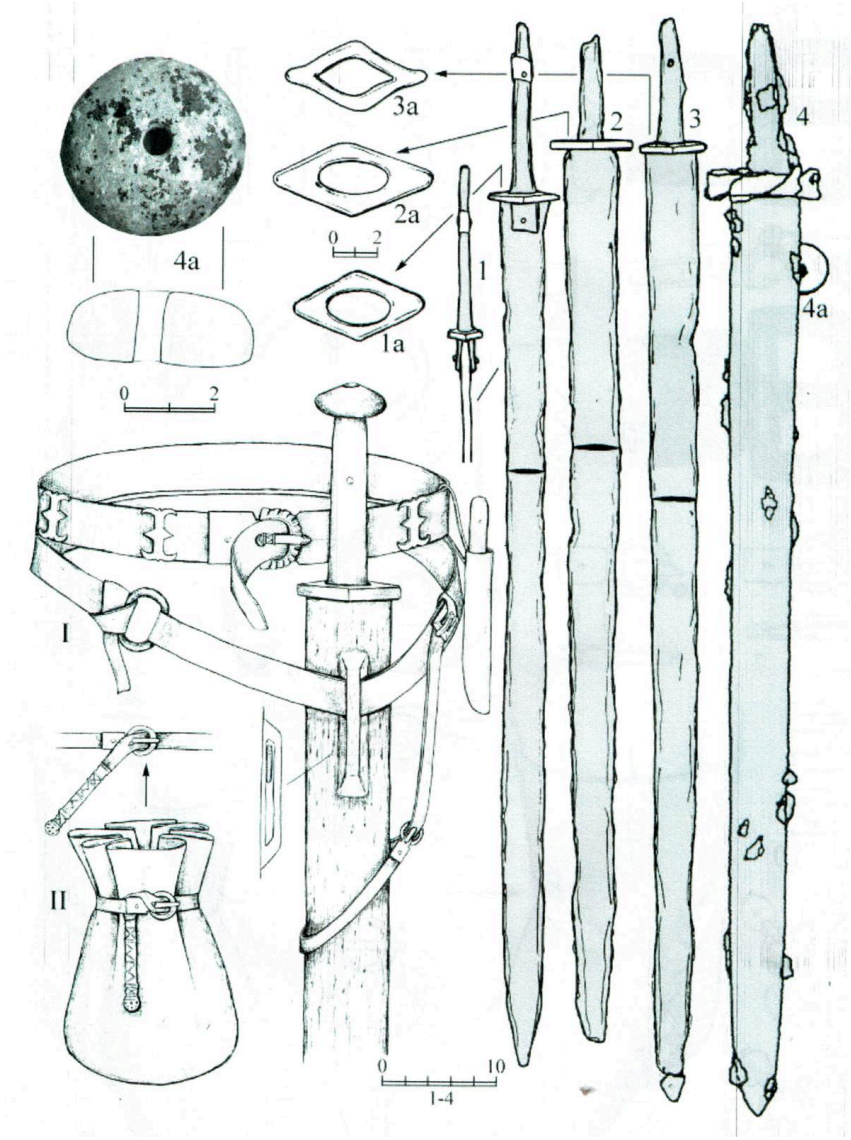


Contents of a warrior burial of the first half of the 5th century, from near the village of Luciîste, Crimea (crypt 88, burial 5). (**I, top right**) Burial plan; (**II**) Boot/ shoe reconstruction. (Drawings and composition by Andrea Salimbeti, ex-E. A. Khairedinova)

The Visigoths, from the Balkans to Rome (4th–5th centuries)

In 376, on the banks of the Danube, both of the distinct Gothic groups (*Tervingi/* Visigoths and *Greutungi/* Ostrogoths) asked the Romans for asylum from the advancing Huns (AM, XXXI, 2, 1). The Eastern Emperor Valens (r. 364–378) agreed, but in the event the Romans allowed entry to the *Tervingi* only; while they were ferried across the Danube, Imperial troops kept the *Greutungi* north of the river, where they faced starvation. Lupicinus, the local Imperial commander, plotted to destroy the internal cohesion of even the *Tervingi* by setting a trap for their leaders at a banquet in Marcianopolis (modern Devnya, Bulgaria). The Visigoth leader Fritigern escaped, and led a widespread Gothic revolt (AM, XXXI, 4–5). Lupicinus was defeated at the gates of Marcianopolis, and both Visigoth and Ostrogoth raiders spread far and wide during 377; with the help of *Taifal* Goths from Dacia and some Huns and Alans, they forced the outnumbered Romans to retreat south of the Danube. (The leaders of groups within such fragmented peoples often formed temporary alliances across tribal/ ethnic lines.)

Valens arrived in the Balkans in spring 378 with the bulk of his campaign army. Believing an erroneous report which understated Gothic strength, Valens did not wait for promised reinforcements from his Western colleague Gratian (r. 367–383), and decided to attack. In August 378, near Adrianople in Thrace, the battle began before the Romans could fully deploy, and they were outflanked. Valens was killed, with many of his senior officers and perhaps two-thirds of his army, thus badly weakening the Eastern Empire for years afterwards.



Long swords with diamond-shaped crossguards from burials of *c.*400–450 in south-western Crimea. (**1–3**) Luciîste, crypt 88; (**4**) Almalyk-Dere, crypt 171/2004. (**I & II**) Reconstruction of a military belt set, with sword belt and waist pouch, based on finds from burial 5 (crypt 88) near Luciîste. (Drawing and composition by Andrea Salimbeti, ex-E. A. Khairedinova)

The triumphant Goths and their allies swarmed through the Balkans, even planning to besiege Constantinople itself (AM, XXXI, 11–16). In 379 the Ostrogoths of Alatheus and Saphrax, part of whose forces consisted of a Hunnic tribe, obtained a footing in Pannonia; the following year they won further victories over the outnumbered East Romans, and forced their new Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395) to retreat on Constantinople. In 381 Gratian's Western troops managed to push Fritigern's Goths back in Pannonia. An agreement was reached in October 382; recognized as Roman *foederati*, the Visigoths were

assigned territory in northern Thrace (the provinces of Scythia and Moesia Minor), and in Macedonia.

Spatha from the necropolis of Daganzo de Arriba, Madrid, mid-5th to mid-7th centuries. This specimen has been included by scholars in the Chassemy-Pfullingen subgroup. (Museo de San Isidro., inv. no.CE1974/124/57, Ayuntamiento de Madrid; photo by Miguel Ángel Otero, Museo de San Isidro)

According to the Germanic conception, Gothic leaders considered themselves bound by pacts only as individuals and not on behalf of a 'state'. In 386 a new force of Ostrogoths led by a certain Odotheus tried to pass south of the Danube, but were heavily defeated by Theodosius with an army strong in Gothic auxiliaries. After alternating rebellions and fragile truces, in 390 a young Visigothic prince named Alaric – a former officer of auxiliaries – led his own warriors, Huns and other tribesmen from Thrace to loot large areas of the Balkans, in order to apply pressure on Constantinople to renegotiate the treaty of 382. Theodosius personally intervened in 391, but was ambushed on the Maritsa river, narrowly escaping with his life. In 392 Alaric's Visigoths were surrounded in Thrace by Theodosius's great Romano-Vandal general Stilicho, but Theodosius subsequently let them return to their province, renewing the treaty of 382. According to Jordanes, after the death in January 395 of Theodosius 'the Great' (who had been emperor of both East and West since 392), Stilicho stopped paying the Visigoths their annual subsidy, causing renewed hostility.

Alaric, proclaimed king of the Visigoths in 395, invaded Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Boeotia and Attica. Stilicho, now regent (and effectively the military ruler) of the Western Empire on behalf of the boy emperor Honorius (r. 393–423), checked these incursions; but the new Eastern Emperor, Theodosius's weak son Arcadius (r. 395–402), ordered Stilicho to withdraw, and the Eastern Roman army to return to Constantinople. The contingent left at Thermopylae to defend the approach to Greece was defeated by the Visigoths, who crossed Boeotia and Attica, occupied Piraeus, and forced Athens to surrender.

During 396 they occupied the Peloponnese, devastating Corinth, Argos, Sparta and many other centres. In 397 Alaric obtained from the court at Constantinople the higher Roman status to which he had long aspired.

Between 400 and 410 the Visigoths entered Italy (*Get*., 147) three times, being defeated by Stilicho at Pollentia in 402. They repeatedly attempted to persuade Honorius to grant them a province in which to settle, but in vain. In 408 Honorius, distrustfully resentful of Stilicho's prestige, had his greatest soldier murdered. The Visigoths then returned to blockade Rome once again. In August 410 the Salaria gate was treacherously opened to them, and Alaric's warriors looted the 'Eternal City' for three days, thus symbolically humiliating the Western Empire, even though the actual capital had long been at Ravenna. (The real damage done would be far exceeded during Rome's two-week sacking by Genseric's Vandals in 455.) Alaric then marched south, with the intention of taking ship to Sicily and perhaps to Africa, but he fell ill and died near Cosenza in Calabria shortly afterwards.

The Ostrogoths, from the Balkans to Italy (5th century)

In the late 4th century the Ostrogoths who remained along the eastern borders of the Empire fell, like many other Germanic peoples, under Hunnic rule. When Attila briefly achieved sole leadership of the Huns, Ostrogoths took part in his European incursions. In 451 their cavalry fought for him in his losing battle of the Catalaunian Fields (near modern Châlons-en-Champagne) against the allied army of the Roman *magister militum* Aetius and Theodoric I's Visigoths. Following Attila's death in 453 and the consequent fragmentation of his kingdom, two main Ostrogothic bands are identified. One, led by the brothers Valamer, Theodemir and Videmer of the Amal tribe (*Get.* 264–265; Cass., *Var.* III, 23), inhabited Pannonia with the status of Imperial *foederati,* in territory granted by the Eastern Emperor Marcianus (r. 450–457).

Their annual subsidies reportedly ceased when Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474) shifted his favour to another Gothic ruler: Theodoric Strabo, son of Triarius, king of the Thracian Goths. A consequent inter-Gothic war in Illyricum (Pannonia) ended in 461; the following year a son of

Theodemir the Amal, also named Theodoric, was sent as a princely hostage to Constantinople, where Leo raised him as a true Roman before returning him to his father (*Get*., 259–264; 268–282; 287–288). The young man succeeded Theodemir as king in Pannonia in 474; his military talent soon earned him Roman recognition, and his people the status of *foederati,* from the Emperor Zeno (r. 474–491). Stationed with his army at Novae (in modern Bulgaria) in 475–476, Theodoric helped Zeno recover his throne from the usurper Basiliscus (*Pan.*, III, 12; *Anon. Val*., 9. 42), and was rewarded with honours. Rivalry between this Theodoric the Amal and Theodoric Strabo caused lengthy violence which outlasted the latter's death in 481, but in 483 Zeno appointed Theodoric the Amal *magister militum praesentalis* and entrusted him with the Roman defence of Moesia and Dacia Ripensis. In the event, however, he and his Gothic troops were actually sent east to help crush rebels led by Illus and Leontius (*Pan.*, IV, 15).

Two years later Goths in Thrace rebelled once again, and Zeno got their fellow Germanics out of the way by sending Theodoric and his troops to Italy (*BG*, I, 1 [V, 1, 4–11]; *Anon. Val*., 11.49; *Get.*, 290–292). Their mission was to fight mutinous Germanic *foederati* there, who had proclaimed their general Odoacer king in 476, prompting him to march on Ravenna and depose the last nominal Western Emperor, the boy Romulus Augustulus. Travelling from Novae, Theodoric reached Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica, in Serbia); after winning a battle against the Gepids on the river Ulca/ Vuka (*Pan.* V, VII; Paul Diac., *Hist. Rom*., XV, 15), he arrived in Italy in spring or summer 489 with a large following (Ennodius, *V. Epiph.,* 109, 37–39, p.97). If he achieved victory, Theodoric was promised rule over Italy as the emperor's viceroy/ vassal. To the Italic peoples (some of whom, along with the old Italic legions, supported Odoacer), he presented himself as a champion of Rome, legitimized by the Imperial power, with the blessing of God to deliver Italy from its 'tyrant' (*Pan.*, XXIII, 9).

Details of the silver-furnished scabbard in the previous photo. (Museo de San Isidro., inv. no. CE1974/124/57; Ayuntamiento de Madrid; photo by Miguel Ángel Otero, Museo de San Isidro)

Helmeted head of bearded warrior in relief, 5th to 6th centuries, from the Tolonia Collection in Celano Castle in the Abruzzo region of Italy, so probably Ostrogothic. The helmet cheek-guard of Late Roman shape is discernible. (Museum of Celano Castle, Tolonia Collection, inv.no. 67505; photos Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

The Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy (489–552)

Ennodius's work *De Vita Epiphani (V. Epiph.)* contains useful information about the war in Italy. The first confrontation with Odoacer's army took place on the Isontius river in August 489; Theodoric crossed the river by surprise to take his enemy from behind, achieving a bloody and overwhelming Gothic victory (CHP s.a. 490). Odoacer retreated to Verona, where he suffered a second defeat in which Theodoric personally led wavering troops in the decisive attack. Odoacer was then forced to shut himself up in Ravenna. His general

Tufa, with the bulk of Odoacer's army, was forced to surrender at Pavia and Milan, and then changed sides (*Anon. Val*., 11. 51). Theodoric, trusting in Tufa's loyalty, dispatched him to Faenza and Ravenna with a band of elite soldiers; but Tufa changed sides again, and the force entrusted to him was destroyed (*Anon. Val*., 11. 52; *V. Epiph*. 111, 10–16, 98).

C VISIGOTHS, 4th–5th CENTURIES AD

(1) Gothic warrior; Adrianople, 378

This figure represents a foot-warrior of Fritigern's combined force at Adrianople. According to Ammianus Marcellinus's *Histories* (AM*.,* XXXI, 5.9), the Goths of the late 4th century carried shields, spears and swords ('the barbarians rushed recklessly on crowds of our men, dashed their shields against opponents' bodies, and with spear and sword ran through those who opposed them'). This warrior is reconstructed according to the interpretation of V.I. Kulakov, with weaponry of the second half of the 4th century from southern Crimea (Taman, Suvlu Kaya). He is armed with both a *semi-spatha* and a *spatha;* the latter, from Taman, has been illustrated according to its possible original shape.

(2) Gothic cavalryman in Roman service; Frigidus river, 394

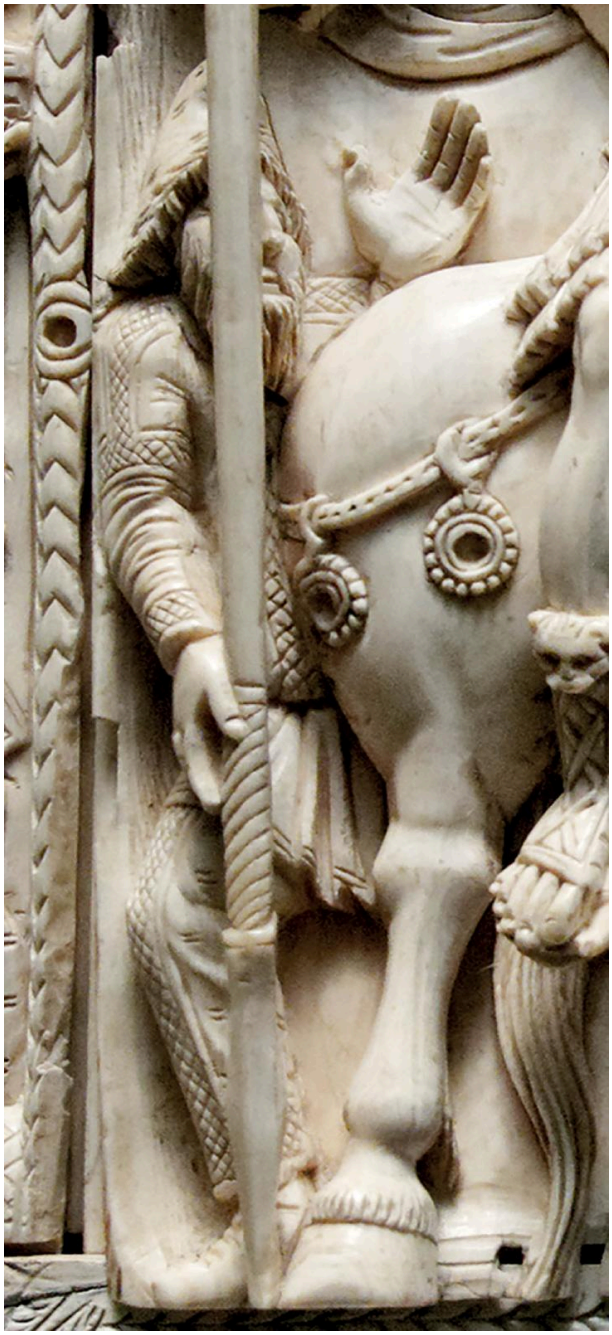
At the battle of the Frigidus river in 394, Visigothic horsemen formed the vanguard of the Emperor Theodosius's army led by Stilicho against the usurper Eugenius, and consequently suffered serious losses. This rider is copied from Gothic warriors represented on surviving parts of Theodosius's Column in Constantinople. The *deigmaton* on his shield represents one of the variants associated with the *Tervingi* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Unarmoured apart from a Late Roman helmet, he is heavily armed with a spear, javelin and sword copied from grave-finds of the late Chernjakov culture (e.g. from Kompanijci), and his horse harness decorations are from the Kerch Necropolis.

(3) King Alaric I; Italy, *c.*410

Except for his Phrygian cap and fur cloak, Alaric, king of the Visigoths and conqueror of Rome, displays equipment worthy of a Roman *magister militum* – a status he had sought from Constantinople or Ravenna. His splendid helmet of Deurne-Berkasovo typology is copied from the tomb-find at Concesti in Romania, and his hexagonal shield, copied from Kerch fragments and the shield on the Halberstadt Dyptich, bears an Arian cross. His decorated, polychrome 'muscled' cuirass comes from the Faenza mosaic, from which we also copy the tunic and trousers, and

the central round brooch on his thrown-back cloak. Note the superior quality of his sword, decorated with gold and almandine (garnet) cloisonné-work.

The war continued, while Burgundians and Vandals also raided Italian territory. In 490 Odoacer struck back, taking both Milan (Ennodius, *In Nat. Laur.* 1. 5–18, 3) and Cremona, and besieging Pavia – now the main Gothic base, which was held by Theodoric's Rugian ally Fridiricus. However, Visigoths led by Alaric II intervened to support Theodoric; the siege of Pavia was lifted, and in August 490 Odoacer suffered a major defeat on the banks of the Adda river. Odoacer returned to Ravenna, while the Senate and numerous Italian cities submitted to Theodoric. In 492–493 Fridiricus defeated and killed Tufa between Trento and Verona (*Auct. Prosp. Havn*. s.a. 493; *Fast. Vind. Prior* s.a. 493). The last Herulian Germanic resistance was destroyed at the night battle of the Pine Grove outside Ravenna, where Odoacer's general Levilla drowned while attempting to escape (*Anon. Val.* 11. 54). Ravenna was largely blockaded, but it took time for Theodoric to assemble ships to cut it off completely. It was February 493 before an agreement was ostensibly negotiated to divide Italy between Odoacer and Theodoric. The following month, at a banquet held in Ravenna to mark the treaty, Theodoric supposedly drew his sword and killed Odoacer on the spot, starting a massacre of the latter's troops (*Pan.,* VIII–X, 207–210; AGN.s.a. 493 *c*.39). Thus, reputedly with his own hand, Theodoric 'the Great' finally made himself sole master of Italy.



A detail from the late 5th- or early 6th-century Barberini Dyptich representing Ostrogothic warriors. Although partly hidden by the Imperial lance, note this man's cap, long hair, bearded face and particularly the criss-cross patterned decorative bands on his shoulders, upper sleeves, wrists and legs. (Photo courtesy Wikimedia commons)

Once in power, Theodoric tried to restore the borders of the Western Empire, in some rivalry with Constantinople. At the battle of Horreum Margi in 505 his generals Mundo and Pitzias defeated the Gepid king Thrasaric and the Imperial general Sabinianus, who had joined the latter with Roman and Bulgarian troops (Marc*., Chron.,* s.a. 505). Theodoric brought a large part of Pannonia back under the rule of the

Italic state (*Pan.* XI–XX, 210–214); he earned the respect of the Vandals, freeing Sicily from their incursions; and he brought some Burgundians and Alamans within his borders (*Pan.,* XV, 72). The administrative system of Odoacer's kingdom, which had essentially preserved that of the former Empire, was maintained by Roman citizens. The Senate continued to function; Imperial laws were recognized by the Italic population, while the Goths to some extent followed their own codes.

Theodoric's kingdom did not long survive his death in August 526. The throne passed to his child grandson Athalaric under the regency of his mother, and the lack of a strong heir led to the disintegration of the Ostrogothic state. The Visigothic kingdom regained its autonomy under Theodoric's other grandson Amalaric, relations with the Vandals deteriorated, and the Franks began a new expansion by subduing the Thuringians and Burgundians, and almost evicting the Visigoths from southern Gaul. The great East Roman Emperor Justinian's Romano-Gothic Wars of reconquest in Italy began in 535, and by 554 his generals Belisarius and Narses had retaken the whole peninsula, after a long series of campaigns (Agathias, *MH,* I, 1) against the Ostrogothic kings Wittiges (r. 536–540), Totila (541–552) and Teja (552–553).

The Visigothic kingdom in France & Spain (418–711)

After the death of Alaric I in 410, the Western Emperor Honorius allowed the Visigoths to settle in Gaul, but his court at Ravenna did not provide subsidies. After unsuccessful negotiations, and skirmishes between Visigoths and Roman troops, the former's new king Athaulf made the error of supporting Attalus, an unsuccessful usurper against Honorius, which cost Athaulf his life in 415.

Moving west, in 418 the Visigoths founded the so-called kingdom of Toulouse in Aquitaine. Formally allied with the Western Empire, they promised to provide troops, and during the reigns of Petronius Maximus (455), Avitus (455–456) and Majorian (457–461) the Visigoths – under Theodoric II (r. 453–466), a son of Aetius's former ally Theodoric I, killed fighting the Huns in 451 – contributed significantly to Ravenna's control of its remaining territory. However,

given the Romans' obvious weakness, from 469 King Euric launched a series of independent campaigns to extend his dominions.

In 473 he led a Visigoth army south across the Pyrenees and down the Ebro river valley, receiving the formal submission of the major cities Pamplona and Zaragoza. By 476 a large part of the Iberian peninsula was in his hands, and after Odoacer's deposition that year of the last Western emperor (see above), Euric, now considering his obligations as a *foederatus* to be void, moved north again up the Rhone valley. He soon drove Rome's Burgundian allies out of modern Provence, including the port of Marseille, and by his death in 484 the Visigothic kingdom included nearly all of Spain (minus the north-western territory of the Suebi) and more than two-thirds of modern France.

Gothic warrior figurine from the Isola Rizza dish, second half of 6th century. Note the oval shield, short sword, and decorative banding on the tunic and trousers. (Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

In 494 Alaric II (r. 484–507) clashed with the expansionist Salian Franks led by their able and ambitious king, Clovis. The war was exacerbated from 496 by Clovis's conversion from Arianism to Nicene Christianity (i.e. the orthodox Trinitarian faith declared by Constantine the Great's Council of Nicea in 325). A pause was mediated in 502 by the Ostrogoth king Theodoric in Italy, but fighting resumed in 507 when Clovis (with the goodwill of Constantinople) crossed the Loire and marched on Poitiers. The Visigoths tried to postpone a

confrontation, awaiting their Ostrogoth allies, but the latter were distracted by East Roman seaborne attacks on Italy, and Alaric II was defeated and killed at the battle of Vouillé. However, the war against the Franks and Burgundians in Provence was continued successfully by the Ostrogoths and their Herulian allies in 508–510, culminating in Clovis being forced to lift his siege of Arles. In 511 Theodoric annexed and garrisoned Visigothic Provence as regent for its heir, his child grandson Amalaric, and made peace with Constantinople.

Visigothic bronze buckle from Spain, 7th century. Male graves in different areas of the Iberian Peninsula, and north of the Pyrenees in ancient Septimania, have often yielded such buckles in copper alloy or iron, though with stylistic variations. A magnificent bronze specimen from the province of León, representing a cross between two lions, may be seen in the Archaeological Museum in Madrid. (Numantia Archaeological Museum; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

The Visigoths recovered their independence after Theodoric's death in 526. From 550 they attempted to subjugate Baetica in southern Spain, which was largely governed by Hispano-Roman nobles. These recognized the authority – and followed the Nicene creed – of the Eastern Emperor Justinian, and had the support of the local population. Justinian sent a fleet to Malaga, occupying much of the south-east of the Iberian peninsula in just a year. However, Atanagild (r. 554–568), ruler of both Provence and Spain, carried on fighting the Imperial troops for 13 years, and the region south of the Baetic mountains remained a disputed borderland between Romans and Visigoths well into the 7th century. After a grudging top-down conversion from Arianism to Nicene Christianity under Reccared (r. 586–601), a final campaign in 624–629 saw Swinthila (r. 621–631) capture the last East Roman footholds, in the modern Algarve region.

Following this success the Visigothic kingdom continued to be chronically prone to internal struggles. For instance, the reign (672–

680) of the military reformist Wamba included wars between factions of the nobility, a Basque rebellion and the rising of a Frankish-supported usurper in Narbonne. Immediately after Wamba's death, Islam reached Morocco – across just 9 miles of sea from Baetica – in 681, as the culmination of the Arab invasion of North Africa launched by the Ummayad caliphate in Damascus. In around 708 an early incursion on the Spanish coast was repulsed by Witiza (r. 700–710). After Witiza's death the succession of his son Agila II was prevented by a faction which instead elected the *dux* of Baetica, Roderic.

Agila obtained the support of the Berber Muslim governor of Tangier, Tariq ibn Zayad, and a small Arab-Berber army crossed the strait late in April 711, while Roderic was busy quelling a revolt of the Basques around Pamplona. Tariq occupied Gibraltar ('the mountain of Ṭariq'), and marched on Cordova, but was delayed by Roderic's cousin Benno. After a month-long forced march southward, Roderic's army finally met the invaders at Guadalete near Cadiz. Fighting reportedly continued for eight days (19–26 July 711), ending in Roderic's death and a massacre of his men. Leaderless and divided, the Visigoths were entirely unable to resist the further waves of Arabs and Berbers which soon followed up this victory. Agila's fateful decision to seek Muslim support had led to the destruction of the last Gothic kingdom, and seven centuries of Muslim rule in what became *al-Andalus.*

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The early period

Jordanes attests that the Goths, unlike other Germanic peoples, were under the leadership of a king from the beginning of their migration. Tacitus (*Germania*, 44) also wrote that in 'the monarchy of the *Gotones*, the hand holds the reins somewhat tighter … than among the other tribes of Germans, but not so tightly as to destroy freedom'. Tribal society rested on groups of individuals linked by blood ties, and a fighting force was formed by the equal union of all free men capable of carrying weapons. In such gatherings family clans were represented by the heads of families, who enjoyed some status in the overall assembly; as well as being military leaders, they also had the role of judges.

A good part of the 3rd-century Germanic expansions were spearheaded by simple war-bands of raiders, but the distribution of weapon finds from Danish bogs suggests some well-organized groups of up to a few hundred men, and reported events argue for larger and more diverse forces. For instance, at Abryttus in 251, Cniva must have had some thousands of warriors to defeat the Emperor Decius, and we read that his force included Goths, Carpi, Bastarnae, Taifali and Vandals. The 4th century Visigothic armies more or less permanently incorporated Alans and even some Huns, plus their tribal subordinates. At that time the Gothic kingdoms were multi-ethnic, though led by a Gothic aristocracy with their subordinate class of free men.

THE OSTROGOTHS

In accordance with Germanic social structure, warriors swore loyalty to their leader, creating a bond of mutual dependence in what Late Romans called the *comitatus* – the leader's personal guard and wider retinue – of which numbers were assembled to form the backbone of

Germanic armies. The strength of such ‘household’ forces depended upon the leader’s fame and wealth, as did the quality of their equipment, which he provided or funded. Under Hunnic rule the Ostrogoths had adapted to the mounted tactics of the steppe peoples, but developed heavy ‘shock’ cavalry as distinct from the lighter and more versatile Hunnic horse-archers.

Late Roman dignitary (left: open right hand raised, and long *paludamentum* cloak), depicted with Germanic, possibly Gothic soldiers, on the Carrand Dyptich, *c.*400–450 (a superb but enigmatic ivory which seems to be a very early example of Christian art). All have short-cut hairstyles, moustaches and trimmed beards. The Germanics wear short cloaks, loose trousers, and short boots, and note sword scabbard with crescent chape. (Museo del Bargello, Florence; photos Raffaele D’Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

In this group, note at right a mature man with a forked beard. The right-hand men in both groups seem to wear an outer garment with separate hanging sleeves. (Museo del Bargello, Florence; photos Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

The A*nonymus Valerianus* (9. 42) calls Theodoric '*dux Gothorum'*, 'duke' being a Late Roman Imperial title for a regional military commander. However, from *c.*489 he was styled *rex* (king); this title was current among semi-Romanized barbarian peoples to denote a position inferior only to that of an emperor.

When Theodoric led the Ostrogoths to Italy in 488–489 it was as an entire people drawn from several tribal groupings, with their women, children and goods carried in ox-wagons (*Pan.,* VI). Historians estimated their total numbers as between 120,000 and 300,000, of which warriors made up something between 25,000 and 100,000. The most important of these free armed men were those forming bands serving under established leaders. During a long period of almost constant campaigning, in and out of official Roman-allied service, it is probable that these bands had become quasi-permanent bodies, living and practising their skills together year-round, and regularly fighting alongside one another. Although Theodoric's *exercitus Gothorum* also included some other Germanic peoples such as the Rugii and Scirii, a deep-rooted sense of Gothic identity must have developed during their wanderings in the Balkans between 454 and 488. They may thus be

considered as a true military elite, united not only by language but also by tribal traditions and practice of the Arian faith.

Naturally, a king's basic prestige depended on his leading his warriors in battle. In winter 488, when Theodoric fought the Gepids on the river Ulca on his way to Italy, his men were shaken and checked by tightly packed Gepid cavalry armed with throwing-spears (*lancea*). Ennodius, in his *Panegyricus*, recounts that Theodoric inspired his men by his stirring words before leading the successful counterattack in person; the Gepids were routed, pursued and slaughtered without mercy.

The Ostrogothic kingdom

In Italy the military remained a central feature of politics and society, and the king was its supreme commander. Theodoric envisioned an Italy restored to power and glory, where Romans and Goths could live together under his monarchy as *Gothorum Romanorumque rex* (Cass., *Lett.*, 16, 20). Though very far from being a puppet of the Eastern Emperor, he had no interest in undermining the external Imperial authority in Constantinople, and during years of relative success and prosperity he upheld Roman laws over many aspects of Italian life. However, while the Roman citizens performed the civil administrative duties, the Goths monopolized all military authority, including supervision of the arms and armour factories. Theodoric also imposed a ban on legal marriage between Gothic warriors and Italo-Roman women, to maintain his own people as the dominant class in society.

D OSTROGOTHS, 5th CENTURY AD

(1) Gepid-Gothic aristocratic warrior; Pannonia, *c.*450
Graves of such leaders are characterized by magnificent costume accessories, splendid weapons, richly decorated horse harness including the saddle, adornments such as

brooches and golden bracelets, and tableware. This elite warrior is wearing a helmet of East Roman manufacture copied from a specimen found in southern Russia. His cloak is fastened with the precious eagle *fibula* from Pietroasele, and his horse harness decorations are copied from a magnificent find at Apahida.

(2) Ostrogothic elite *foederatus*, *c.*477
This warrior follower of Theodoric Strabo is armed with a long sword of Late Roman type, and a single-edged *sax* fighting knife. Noble Gothic warriors displayed rich panoplies in which combined Roman and Germanic traditions were often recognizable. Most often a ringmail armour was worn, sometimes with long sleeves and a mail coif, visible on the miniatures of the *Vergilius Vaticanus*. The *deigmaton* on his shield is that of *Tervingi* from the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

(3) Herulian princely warrior of Theodoric's *comitatus*, second half of 5th century
The period spent by Goths and other Germanic peoples (such as the Herulii) under the dominance of the Huns produced a synthesis of East Roman and nomad military equipment. This warrior's *Spangenhelm* of early Baldenheim type, and details of his horse harness, are from the Klimovo finds. The *spatha* is obscured here, but the remains of one single-edged sword show a gold-forged pommel and a gilded scabbard inlaid with almandine garnets, like elements of his belts. Note his recurved composite bow of Hunnic type, and the decorated quiver; his raised saddle is also Hunnic, from a specimen found at Diurso and related to the Tetraxite Goths. From the Huns, too, he copies the barbaric custom of suspending a slain enemy's skull from his harness.

Theodoric followed a practice of assigning a third of the large Italian estates (formerly held by Odoacer's aristocracy) to his leading soldiers, who lived off the produce while remaining permanently under arms, and a third to Gothic colonists who farmed the land, free of taxation but

also owing military obligations.The local Roman magnates retained the other third of the territory. The Gothic incomers would be summoned annually to public assemblies, to receive orders and collect salaries and, where appropriate, generous gifts as rewards for loyal service (thus maintaining their personal relationship with the king).

The assignment of land was organized so as to ensure a military presence in the most vulnerable regions, and there was a distinction between rural settlements of long occupation, where the Goths were considered ‘neighbours and companions’ of the Romans, and the separate garrisons of Gothic soldiers (*milites Gothorum; Pan.*, VII, 30). According to V. Bierbrauer (1975) and T.S. Burns (1980), the main areas of Gothic settlement were in the north, in the Po Valley and in the Apennines between modern Emilia, Umbria and Tuscany, with major centres at Ravenna, Pavia, Verona and Treviso, and others at Milan, Tortona, Tridentum and Aquileia. Once settled on hereditary lands, the aristocrats and other free Ostrogoths usually divided them further, between their relatives and servants.

Fortified towns and outposts were established and garrisoned to protect the northern Alpine borders against the Burgundians and particularly the Franks. Procopius mentions a significant presence in the western Po valley and the passes of the Alpine arc above it, between the Roman provinces of Liguria and Alpes Cottiae: ‘On those Alps … there are many castles, guarded from ancient times by Goths who, many and valiant, lived there together with their wives and children’. In spring 539 some 4,000 of such warriors would be assembled in Pavia alone, to support besieged Ravenna. At about the same time the Ostrogoth king Wittiges is reported as saying in a speech to his soldiers that the greatest proportion of arms and equipment was located in Venetia and Gaul (north-east Italy, probably part of Noricum, and Septimania – the southern region of the Mediterranean coast of France). He then began to ’gather all the Goths from every side and to organize and equip them’, except those who were in Gaul facing the Franks.

Defensive measures were also taken on the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coasts and in central and southern Italy, anticipating seaborne attacks by Byzantium. Naples was strongly garrisoned, and Rome was defended by 4,000 Goths commanded by Leutheris (*BG,* V, 8, 11).

Other advanced strongholds were planted during external campaigns in southern Gaul, Noricum and Dalmatia. The Goths may have re-used late 5th-century Roman fortifications. Recent investigations of some in the Julian Alps have identified phases of occupation from Theodoric's period. In Tortona (Dertona) the king urged the joint Gothic and Roman population to build a castle within the surviving walls. This model seems comparable with that adopted in the *castellum Verrucas* near Trento, and in similar structures near Asti, Padua and Monte Barro.

Roman authors refer to the Gothic army using the old Latin terms (*acies, exercitus*, *legio: Pan*., VIII, 38, 41, 45). In 489 Theodoric's followers were mainly Ostrogoths and the Rugian exiles of Fridiricus, the latter maintaining their own infantry and cavalry units. The Gothic kings maintained a large elite *comitatus*. In his *Variae,* Cassiodorus refers to them by the Late Roman terms for Imperial bodyguard units, the *domestici comites* and *scholares*. Mounted and infantry royal bodyguards based on the capital, Ravenna, are referred to as *domestici patres equitum et peditum.*

The term *milites* is used of Gothic soldiers in the *exercitus*, as opposed to *Romani* or Italian provincials. Gothic recruitment continued the traditional system: all free men were potential warriors, summoned at need, and fighting in the hope of gaining land and improving their social status. However, after the defeat and capture of Wittiges by Belisarius's army at the end of 539 the number of Ostrogoths available declined. Mercenaries from Scandinavia had been employed since Theodoric's time, and under Wittiges others had come from among the Suebi of Istria (modern Slovenia/ Croatia), and Burgundians and Franks who had settled in northern Italy (*colonii*). Early in Justinian's Romano-Gothic Wars other Germanic leaders had sent reinforcements to the Goths, drawn from subject or temporarily allied communities such as Burgundians, sub-Roman Gauls, Thuringians and Alamanni (*BG,* V; [XIII, 25]); these too served in separate units. Many Italic Latins filled out the ranks of the late Gothic army under Totila, and Jews distinguished themselves in the defence of Naples (*BG*, V, 10). He also benefited from receiving Imperial soldiers who deserted when they went unpaid (*BG,* V [XVII, 12–18]). These Romans received the same treatment, duties and privileges as the Goths, but served in distinct contingents (*cohortes gentiles*) commanded by Gothic officers, and

were often deployed only for secondary garrison duties. So too were peasants – and even slaves – from the estates of southern Italy, who were also enlisted in Totila's hard-pressed army. Poorly armed and trained, these were of little military value.

The Gothic forces were mainly structured like the Roman ones, comprising heavy cavalry, heavy infantry, light infantry and archers. The formidable spear-armed heavy cavalry, called *militondas*, was formed around a core of Gothic aristocrats and their retinues. The building-block throughout the army, as in society at large, was the clan of related families. These formed units of 100 men (*centenarii*) under the command of a *centenarius* (*hansa* in Germanic language). The cavalry and infantry in the field formed roughly 1,000-man multiples of these companies (*millenas* or *millenarii; hundafaps* in Gothic). Roman historians are respectful of the Goths' skill-at-arms and courage, even comparing their level of training to that of gladiators. In his *Variae,* Cassiodorus mentions that adolescent Goths came of age when they were fit to serve in the army (so, plausibly, at perhaps the age of 15?), and also reports the training of such *iuvenes* in archery. Ennodius (*Pan.,* XIX, 83) calls the Goths 'unconquerable' because of their constant practice in wargames, and Procopius (*BG*, V, 2) seems to praise their application to fighting with both sword and spear. He also writes admiringly of their stubborn bravery, recounting the example of a warrior named Visandus Vandalarius during the battle for Rome. This man fought relentlessly until he finally fell after suffering 13 wounds. He was given up for dead, but when the Goths subsequently gathered the bodies of their fallen from the battlefield he was found to be still breathing; carried back to camp, he was celebrated as a hero. (*BG,* V [XVIII, 27–32]).

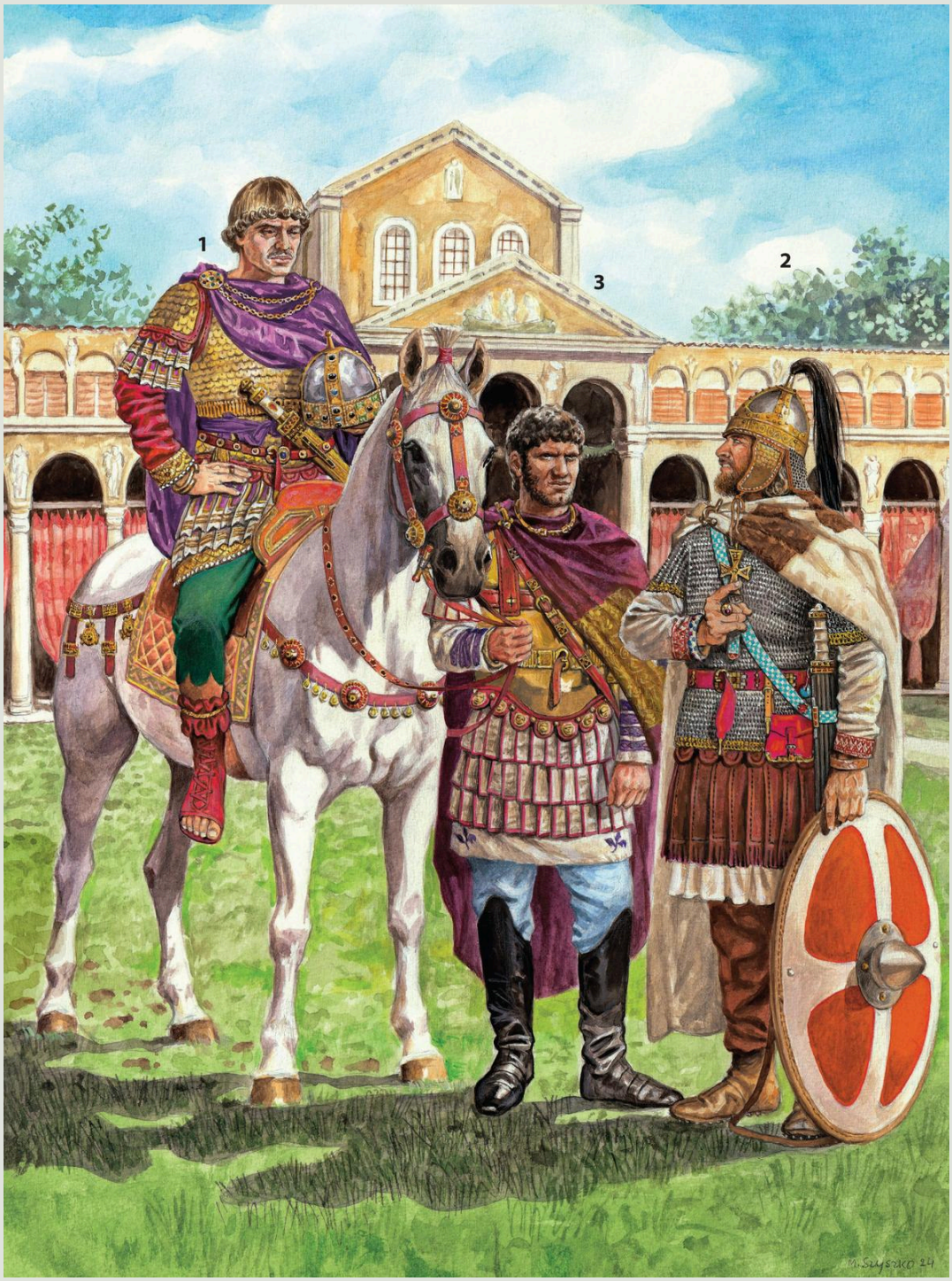
The 'Senigallia Medallion' of Theodoric the Great (see **Plate E1 opposite**). Given his supreme status in Italy as both king of the Ostrogoths and viceroy of the Emperor, we may presume that Theodoric's armour outshone that of even his wealthiest followers. As well as this scale corselet, Ennodius also describes him as wearing greaves. (Museo Palazzo Massimo, Rome; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

As among all Germanic peoples, the bulk of an army was the infantry. It entered battle drawn up in the classic compact wedge (*cuneus,* 'boar's head') formation, led in the centre by its commander backed by members of his *comitatus*. This tight formation brought maximum impact to bear against a narrow section of the enemy front in order to break into its ranks. Very often Gothic horsemen also dismounted and joined the ranks of their infantry in combat, especially when on rough terrain. These tactics limited the use of archers, and, late in the campaigns against Justinian's armies, Totila and Teja actually forbade their men from carrying any throwing weapons. This had disastrous consequences when the *cuneii* came up against Roman archers in strength.

The size of Theodoric's Gothic army was considerable (see above), but during the to-and-fro campaigns of the Romano-Gothic Wars it varied sharply. Procopius (*BV*, III ,8) states that Wittiges' predecessor on the throne, Theodahad/ Theodatus (assassinated in 536), was willing to send Justinian 3,000 warriors every year for his campaigns (*BG,* V, 5), but this, together with other widespread commitments, left him with a field army of hardly 10,000 men. Nevertheless, in 537–538 Wittiges

supposedly raised some 50,000 to besiege Belisarius in Rome. At the other extreme, the beginning of Totila's reign in 541 found the Gothic army only some 5,000 strong. In his final and fatal defeat at Tagina (Busta Gallorum) in July 552 Totila's army is estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000 (half the size of the opposing Roman force.)

E OSTROGOTHIC KINGDOM, 6th CENTURY AD



(1) Theodoric the Great, *c.*511–526

The king is carrying the precious *kamelaukion* crown-helmet described by Ennodius. This was a sort of *Bandenhelm*, incorporating the famous surviving *corona ferrea* ('iron crown ... fashioned with diverse gems, [including the green] central stone which the powerful serpent guards'), sent to him by the Emperor from Constantinople for his *insignia* as King of Italy. We show *Theodoricus rex* with the features, hairstyle and scale corselet from the Senigallia Medallion (see above), and wearing on his left side a *gladius.* (Ennodius, *Pan.*, VIII, 42). Ennodius also describes Theodoric as wearing greaves, and the 'purple of the nobility'; his garments, of Chinese silk, are dyed with the most precious *murex* (*Pan*, XXI, 89). His *paludamentum* military cloak (*Pan.*, IV. 17) is that of a Roman general. The reins (*habenae*) and saddle are decorated following the superb East Roman find from Apahida, and the remains of a saddle from Ravenna.

(2) Frankish officer in Ostrogothic service; Noricum, *c.*550

As is exemplified throughout this text, the choice of a mercenary employer by men of any ethnic background was largely an individual matter. We imagine this leader as a Frank in Theodoric's service (such as perhaps the commander of the roadblock at Iuenna). The officer buried in grave 11 at Globasnitz was dressed in a woollen *chlamys* fastened on the right shoulder with an iron brooch of Desana type decorated with inlaid copper lines. The morphological character of his helical belt fittings confirm that they and the buckle belonged to a military belt, and red belts are believed to have been distinctive of officers. Since he is a Frank, we have given him the sword baldric from Lavoye.

(3) Roman *scholarius*, *c.*530

It has been said that Theodoric disbanded Odoacer's Roman guard regiments, the *Domestici* and *Scholae,* in accordance with his law forbidding Romans in Italy from bearing arms. However, close study of the texts cited to

support this claim yields the opposite meaning (although the rank of *comes domesticorum vacans* was perhaps only honorific). The existing Praetorian prefects who served Theodoric in his re-organization of Italy and redistribution of land to the Goths were Roman civil functionaries of great capacities and importance, such as Liberius (*fl.* 493–500) and Faustus Iunior (*fl.* 508–512), and on their travels they would certainly have been accompanied by Roman guardsmen. Note the *thorakion heroikon* cuirass, and the belts decorated with gold cloisonné of Byzantine origin.

Relief from a 5th- to 6th-century Romano-Visigothic sarcophagus from Camino Vejo de Almodovar, Spain. This represents a military retinue, probably a hunting party, accompanied by carts or wagons with four-horse teams. Under magnification, the left-hand complete horseman can be seen to carry a short crossbow as well as a round shield, and the rider following him a javelin. One has a long beard, and the far right-hand man a *pileus pannonicus* 'pillbox' cap. (Photo courtesy Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba)

THE VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM

In the era which began in 416 with king Wallia's agreed settlement in Aquitaine as a *foederatus* of the Western Emperor Honorius, the Visigoth army was conventionally formed from the retinues of aristocrats around the core of the royal *comitatus*. It was ethnically Gothic, though composed of three former groupings. Theodoric I (r. 418–451) expanded his territory south-eastwards in the 420s–430s, finally defeating a combined Roman and Hunnic force at Toulouse in 439. On behalf of the Western Emperor Avitus (r. 455–456), Theodoric II campaigned in Spain in the 450s–460s, defeating the branch of the far-flung Suebi peoples which had settled in Galicia (north-west Spain and northern Portugal). These expansions widened the Visigothic monarchy's military recruitment pool, and from this time onwards we

also know that provincial Hispano-Romans served in its military and administrative structures. While the Visigoths retained their authority, in practical terms the difference between Goths and Romans steadily diminished, and more than one Gallo- or Hispano-Roman rose to the status of *dux* in the army.

Towards the end of the kingdom both Wamba (r. 672–680) and Erwig (680–687) introduced laws to reflect current realities, the former obliging the greater part of the population to provide food for the army. Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae*, written soon after 673, significantly refers to that army as the *exercitus Hispaniae*. In 681, Erwig extended an equal liability for military service, on pain of losing their civil rights, to both Goths and Hispano-Romans, ordering all the magnates of his kingdom to arm their servants for war (*LV*.IX, 2, 9). Defensive equipment was to be either a *zaba* or a *lorica,* plus shields (*scuta*), though helmets are not mentioned. Weapons were to be swords (*spathae*) or long *scramasax* knives, bows (*sagittae*) or throwing-spears (*lanceae*), and even the poorest could carry slings or other cheap weapons, presumably adapted from agricultural tools.

Visigothic Spain was a military monarchy, where the king either marched at the head of the army or delegated this function to a *comes exercitus* or to one or more *duces.* The military forces consisted of the king's bodyguards and *comitatus*, of mobilized garrisons, and, at need, of an assembled field army. The royal private retinue consisted of the *fideles regis*, the *seniores et comites palatii* of the court nobility*,* and the *gardingi.* These were bonded to the king by an oath of loyalty of a particularly personal and comprehensive nature, which confirms the persistence of Germanic culture in 6th–7th Hispanic society. It promised fidelity, sincere service, watchful protection, and assistance in war. The *gardingi* were young aristocrats who fought alongside the king, with the duty to guard his person. Although it is said that Theodoric I's Visigoths had fought in packed Roman-style infantry ranks in 451, the Goths had a passion for horsemanship, and the whole of the king's guard was mounted. Isidorus of Seville (*Historia Gothorum,* 69) admires their skill when fighting on horseback, armed not only with spears but also with throwing-darts.

As in other established Gothic territories, the assembled army was formed from all free men between about 20 and 50 years old who were

capable of bearing arms – Goths, later Romans, and even secular clergy. Its composition followed a decimal system of units of increasing size: *decania*, *centenas* and *millenas*, commanded respectively by a *decanus*, *centenarius* and *millenarius.* Such units were supposed to have strengths of 10, 100, 500 (title unclear) and 1,000, culminating in a 10,000-strong regional corps, of which a large field army might have several. (Some scholars identify the term *thiufa* with the 1,000-man division, believing it to have been the largest tactical formation. Others interpret *thiufa* as a collective term for the *exercitus* plus the *hostis* – see below.)

According to a long-lived system dating back to the kingdom of Toulouse, field armies included the *exercitus* – the permanent nucleus of magnates and their retinues – and the temporary *hostis*, forcibly recruited and incorporated at need. To these were added the garrisons of strongholds and cities, depending upon local circumstances. As in Italy, the military *castella* were strategically sited, often on hills dominating the old road network, and Spanish archaeologists have recovered important finds of military equipment on such sites.

Goths in Roman service

Dio Cassius (*Rom.*, LXXV, 3) recounts that in AD 196 leaders of the 'Scythians' (Σκύθαι, as some Classical sources identify the Goths) planned to attack the Emperor Septimius Severus, but were dissuaded by superstition when three of their number were struck by lightning. The Goths delivered hostages to Severus, and it was probably on this occasion that Gothic warriors were first collectively enlisted into Roman service. They were recruited either simply as a term of the peace, or following a covenant (*foedus*) – a formal treaty recognizing or providing lands for their people in exchange for military service.

The 6th- to 8th-century Cercadilla plaque from Córdoba is a limestone casting mould representing a Visigothic heavy cavalryman. Long hair was a sign of high status in Visigothic culture, which accords with this man's wearing what appears to be a lamellar armour. Note the torque round his neck, the small round shield, and the pronounced pommel of his sword. (Photo courtesy Dr Rafael Hidalgo Prieto)

Gothic *auxilia* within the Roman army and *foederati* allied to it are attested in 3rd-century sources. The funerary inscription for a soldier's teenage son at Imtān (ancient Motha) in Roman Arabia suggests close military relations between Goths and Romans: 'Monument of Guththa, son of Erminarius, commander (*praepositus*) of the auxiliary troops (*gentiles*) stationed among the Mothani. He died at the age of 14. In the year 102, the 21st of Peritius' (i.e. 28 February, AD 208). The personal names suggest Goths, and *gentiles* in the Eastern Roman army were auxiliaries, connected by M.P. Speidel to Severus's second Parthian campaign (197–199). They were *salariarii*, i.e. regular soldiers but who were enlisted only for temporary border garrison or local campaign service, receiving a *salaria* rather than a *stipendium.*

Caracalla (r. 198–217) also recruited Goths and Alamans for his Parthian campaign of 217 (Dio Cass., *Rom*., LVIII, 5; Herod., IV, 7, 3). Some of their leaders were promoted centurions, and others were even chosen to join the personal guard of the emperor, the '*leones'*. Germanic allies (σύμμαχοι) of the Eastern Army fought against Elagabalus (r. 218–222) for Macrinus (217–218), but after his victory

Elagabalus sent them home (Herod., V, 4 ,8; Dio Cass., *Rom.,* LXXX, 4, 5). We find Goths again in the army of Gordian III defeated by the Sassanian Persians in 244 (Maricq, *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, III.1, 306). During the 4th century the Visigoths living in the former province of Dacia had many commercial and military contacts with the Empire, and underwent a progressive assimilation especially in the military sphere. Their nobles created private armies, some of which were subsequently absorbed into Roman units under Roman commanders. Between 379 and the resolution of his Gothic war in 382, the Emperor Theodosius integrated numerous Gothic warriors into the Roman army's ranks. The Gothic leader Athanaric negotiated a peace with Theodosius, obtaining an official *foedus* and permission to settle in the Balkans, and his warriors would become an integral part of the Roman army there.

From the 3rd century onwards many Goths, serving Rome in various campaigns, were increasingly attracted by the Roman way of life; they intermarried, obtained citizenship and their sons sought careers in existing Roman units. Several of these Goths are identifiable by their names on tombstones from Concordia Sagittaria in Veneto, Italy, where we find 'Flavius Fandigildus, *protector* of *numerus* of *Armigeri*', and 'Flavius Servilius Andia Otraustraguta [Ostrogothic], *centenarius* of the *numerus* of the *Bracchiati*'. It is probable that these soldiers participated in the battle of the Frigidus in 394, Stilicho's victory on Theodosius's behalf over the Western Emperor Eugenius (r. 392–394), and that they then remained stationed in north-east Italy for some time.

Beyond these Goths integrated into existing units, Theodosius incorporated new units in the regular *exerciti praesentales*, i.e. the forces at the direct disposal of the Emperor; we find some bearing the ethnic designations *Visi* and *Tervingi.* Gothic career officers are mentioned in 5th- and 6th-century sources. During the campaign of the Emperor Anastasius against the Persians in 503 we find among the commanders of the Roman expeditionary army the Goths Godidisklus and Bessas. Procopius (*BP*, I, 8; *BG*, V [XVI, 1–7]) describes them as 'men of the noblest birth and experienced in ... warfare', and both later distinguished themselves in Italy during Justinian's Romano-Gothic Wars (*BG,* V [XVII, 6)]; V [XVIII, 32–38]). The 536 campaign also saw Theodoric's former general Pitzias and his Goths change sides en

masse to join Belisarius, delivering to him half of the Samnium region. Goths are also remembered in 541–542, fighting under Belisarius against the Persians (*BP*, II, 14. 21).

ARMOUR & WEAPONS

The potential sources are, as always, a mixture of archaeological, iconographic and narrative. In this case we are limited both by the unclear attribution of some recovered artefacts, and the scarcity of pictorial sources. Graves from the Wielbark culture seldom yield weapons or other military equipment, which may have been considered too valuable not to pass down over generations. From this early period written sources are also rare: e.g., Tacitus (*Germ.,* 43–44) says of the Goths of Pomerania only that 'the distinguishing features of … these tribes are round shields, short swords, and a submissive bearing before their kings.' In Spain, the study of Visigothic equipment is greatly complicated by the difficulty of dating strata laid down during their long period of occupation, and by multiple regional variations. In most northern Spanish burial sites any claim of precise anthropological and archaeological analysis, distinguishing Gothic from Hispano-Roman origins, is usually fallacious.

Front view of the late 5th- or early 6th-century *Bandenhelm* found in the grave of a Gothic chieftain, also illustrated on page 4. This important specimen has been published by Spier (see **Select Bibliogaphy**); it is believed originally to have had a long fixed nose-guard, and attached cheek-guards. (Ferrell Collection, photo courtesy James E. Ferrell)

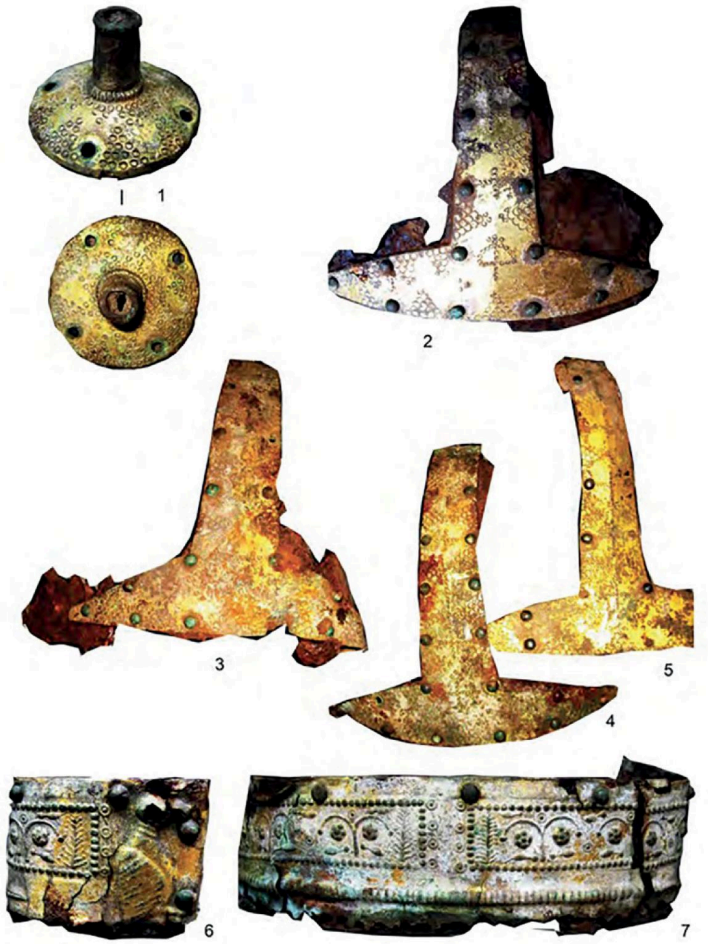
Until at least the mid-6th century, the Goths' service with the Roman army as *foederati* led to their using models of swords, shields and armours closely following those of the Late Imperial armies. However, those armies also extensively used weaponry of Germanic origin, such as throwing-axes (*franciscae*) and javelins (*angones*), which are often found in Gothic graves.

DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT

Helmet (*hilms*)

Sources for the employment of helmets by the Goths in the 2nd–3rd centuries are scarce. The only archaeological find is an iron helmet from Hollabrunn, which is probably a modified Roman auxiliary example. Also of interest is a more elaborate specimen of Roman origin (Deurne-Berkasovo, variant 1a), from the early 5th-century tomb of a chief, probably a Goth, at Conceşti in Romania. That both helmets and armour were worn by the 6th-century elite is attested by Procopius

(*BG,* V; [XXIII, 9]): ‘At the Salarian Gate [stood] a Goth of goodly stature and a capable warrior, wearing a corselet (*θώρακά*) and … a helmet (*κράνος*) ... a man of no mean status in the Gothic nation … [he] stood by a tree and kept loosing many missiles’.



Remains of a *Spangenhelm* discovered by chance, together with a horse bridle, in the Klimovo District, Bryansk Region of Russia; they are believed to reflect an incursion in *c*.475–500 by a small group of Germanic tribes (probably Ostrogoths, Herulii or Gepids). They are of gilded silver and copper alloy, plus fragments (not illustrated) of iron ringmail presumably from an *aventail,* all apparently of East Roman manufacture. Illustrated here are the plume mounting from the apex; most of the four vertical framing bands with extended bases; and parts of the silver-gilt brow band. (Photo courtesy Prof Michael Kazanski)

One of the most used types was the *Spangenhelm*, a metallic helmet of framed and segmented construction, with attached cheek-pieces and sometimes a fitting for a crest. Those of the late 5th and early 6th centuries were mainly produced in East Roman factories, but perhaps

also in Italic *fabricae* reserved to the Ostrogothic elite. Few specimens can be identified as belonging to Gothic officers, exceptions probably being that from Montepagano now in the **Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin**, and one associated with the battle of Tolbiac (524), from Vezeronce. Both of these are products of East Roman workshops and are of Baldenheim typology, fitted with cheek-guards, nose protection and signs of a ringmail *aventail* (neck protection). According to F. Stein, another example of possible Italo-Gothic origin is the surviving gilded frame of the Steinbrunn helmet (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien). One of the Stößen graves is notable for yielding gold threads of a brocade robe, and a valuable gilded helmet of the same typology. Both items come from Italian or East Roman workshops, with Christian symbolism that might be from either; they have been suggested as gifts from the Ostrogothic king Theodoric to the Thuringian king Berthachar. Another possible candidate is the Planig helmet, stylistically similar to that from Stößen.

This important specimen of the neck-guard from a 6th-century Intercisa-Dunapentele type of helmet is embossed with a Roman Medusa and engraved with a Gothic eagle, suggesting the continued use of this typology in the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy. (Museo Stibbert, Florence; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy the Museum)

Coins of Visigothic and Ostrogothic kings of the 6th to 7th centuries show *Spangenhelmen,* but also (in Italy) plumed helmets of Pseudo-Attic typology. One coin of Totila/ Baduila shows him with a *Spangenhelm;* in other cases kings (including Totila) are depicted

wearing a crown-helmet (*kamelaukion*), more similar to a *Bandenhelm*. That of Theodoric the Great was probably commissioned from his goldsmiths at the end of the 5th century. Recent investigations of the so-called *corona ferrea* of Monza (probably the lower band of Theodoric's helmet) suggest that it might have been modelled on that of Constantine I, which the king may have seen in Constantinople, with the addition of gemstones (particularly the central green precious stone mentioned by Ennodius).

Based on the omission of helmets from Erwig's list of required equipment, Nefedkin suggests Visigothic use of mail hoods, but there is no archaeological support for this. The elite may certainly have used *Spangenhelmen,* and the 'Daniel in the Lions' Den' Sarcophagus now in Madrid may depict Visigoth infantrymen in helmets continuing the Late Roman tradition.

F ROMANO-GOTHIC WARS, AD 535–554

(1) King Totila, 553

For his horsemanship, Totila (Baduila) was called '*abramal wair'* – 'warrior without fear'. Here he is reconstructed according to Procopius's description of him before his final battle at Tagina: an armour abundantly plated with gold, and a helmet with royal-purple hair tufts hanging from the cheek-guards and crest, *'*befitting a king, marvellous in their abundance' (*BG,* VIII, [XXXI, 18]). Gothic shields were made of planks covered with leather and painted; they were often adorned with appliqué metal representations of birds, fishes or beasts, as well as with Arian Christian crosses.

(2) Royal standard-bearer, 547
This *domesticus pater equitum* is Totila's 'household' standard-bearer, destined to be killed during his king's second siege of Rome in 547. Dismounted here, he is characteristically equipped as a heavy cavalryman with gear that is both described in written sources and confirmed by archaeological evidence. The helmet is reconstructed from a find in the 'Domagnano treasure' and fragments of another Deurne-Dunapentele example from Sirmium, while the lamellar armour is from recent finds at Kranj. His standard is our hypothetic reconstruction, combining the Arian cross with the eagle of Wotan.

(3) Gothic *capillatus*, mid-6th century
Serving Gothic soldiers may have been distinguished from civilians by their long hair (as *capillati*), a survival from the Late Roman military. Whether this term meant a particular hairstyle, or simply referred to serving soldiers being typically hirsute, is unclear. A distinctive type of shield is described by Procopius as used by the Gothic infantry to protect them from arrows during siege operations: rectangular, and made of either wood or wickerwork (*BG,* V, 87). During the siege of Rome Procopius mentions Gothic warriors holding in front of them shields 'as big as the long Persian ones' (*BG*, V, 22) – a reference to the Sassanian tradition.

Armour

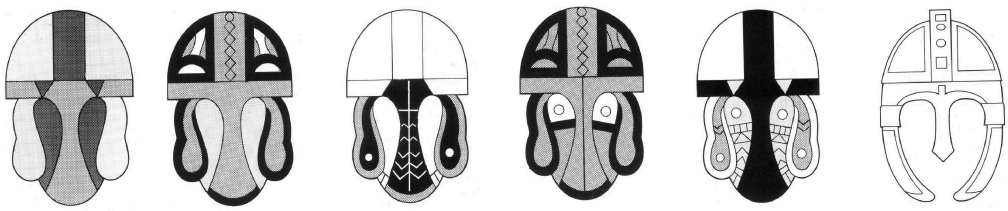
Among the Goths armour was reserved for leaders and their elite followers, and even among these it seems to have been rare in the 3rd and 4th centuries. According to the data of A. Kokowski, B.V. Magomedov and M.E. Levada, archaeology has yielded no items of armour from the Wielbark or Chernyakhov cultures; and not one of the warriors represented on the 3rd-century Ludovisi Sarcophagus is wearing body protection. Gothic elite horsemen must have been the first to wear armour, since they were tribal noblemen who could equip themselves from battlefield booty. Vegetius, writing in about 386, contrasts the Roman infantry, with scarce body armour, with the Roman cavalry who wore armour 'in imitation of Goths, Alans and Huns'. These had respectively 'heavy' armour ('*Alani gravi', Get.* 261) and scale or mail (Veg., *Epit.*, I. 20).

This 6th-century Roman or Ostrogothic helmet is from Montepagano, near Civitella-Giulianova in the Italian region of Marche. It comprises six inner segments of gilded iron, and six outer gilded copper-alloy framing elements, closed at the apex with a riveted copper disc with an apparent plume socket. The brow band is embossed with vine branches and bunches of grapes, birds flying above and on the ground beneath. The rest of the helmet bears punched decoration of birds, animals, warrior figures and a tree and cross motif. The dimensions (ex Vogt) are: height 19.7cm (8.4 ins); max. diameter 21.5cm (8.4 ins); and max. circumference 65cm (25.6 ins). (Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin; ex D'Amato-Negin, 2017)

At Adrianople in 378 some Gothic warriors certainly wore helmets and breastplates if we are to believe Ammianus (XXXI, 13, 3): 'on both sides the strokes of axes (*secures*) split helmets (*galeae*) and cuirasses (*loricae*)*'.* Obviously, thereafter many Goths used Roman gear taken from the battlefield (AM, XXXI, 5, 5: 'the barbarians … killed and looted a great troop of soldiers'; Orosius, *Hist.,* VII, 34, 5: 'Alans, Huns, and Goths …were well supplied with Roman horses and weapons after the destruction of the Roman army').

Gothic leaders, such as Alaric, used Roman armours (Claud., *Bel. Goth*., XXVI, 82). If the identification of a Gothic leader in the Faenza mosaic is correct, his decorated Roman cuirass is visible at the feet of the representation of the Emperor Honorius (see **Gothic shield bosses and grips from the Chernyakhov culture**). In 414 Athaulf appeared at his wedding in a Roman general's uniform (Olympiodorus, fragment 24BL). Ennodius (*Pan*.,VIII, 42) describes Theodoric the Great with pectoral armour (*munimentis chalybis pectus*) and greaves (*ocreae*), and the king's gold medallion clearly represents a scale *squama* (see **Plate E1**).

The Ostrogoths received equipment from state armouries (Cass., *Var.*, I, 40; King Theodoric to Osuin, *Comes*: 'arms must be distributed before necessity can demand it... Procure all necessary arms for the soldiers at Salona, so that the capability for warlike expeditions [will be] available').When elected king in 536, Wittiges ordered assemblies of all Goths in Italy for organization and equipment, distributing arms and horses. By this period, during Justinian's Italian wars, we may assume that Ostrogothic leaders and elite cavalry were normally equipped with mail (*brunjo*), scale or lamellar armour, which can be deduced from many mentions by Procopius (e.g. *BG,* V [XXII, 1, 7]; [XXIII, 9]; & VI [V, 14]). The employment of lamellar corselets (as in fragmentary finds from Germanic graves at Niederstotzingen and Wesel, and the excavation of Kranj) is evoked by the wording of Procopius's descriptions of various single duels (e.g *BG,* VII [IV, 21ff]). Lamellar armour was certainly used by the Visigoths until the 8th century (plaque from Cercadilla, and finds from Ruscino).



Images of helmets copied from those on items of the now-dispersed 6th-century Ostrogothic 'Domagnano treasure', found in San Marino in the 1890s. These seem to confirm that Late Roman Deurne-Berkasovo helmet types were then still in use in Italy. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex-Kidd)

Erwig's Visigothic mobilization law (see above) mentions the employment of two different kinds of armour, *zaba* and *lorica*. Isidorus of Seville writes in his 7th-century *Etimologies* (XVIII, 13) that 'The *lorica* … is made only of iron rings. The *squama* is [a] cuirass made of gilded iron or bronze plates (*lamminis ferreis aut aureis*) linked together in the manner of fish scales and named for their glittering likeness... Cuirasses are both polished, and protected by goat-hair cloth (*cilicium*).' At Isidorus's date the term *lorica* was used in the Roman world mainly for ringmail armour, and *squama* for either scale or lamellar. He does not mention the *zaba*, a word that in his time was another term for ringmail. Scholars are divided over its meaning in Erwig's law: whether simply as an alternative term for *lorica* (Bivat's opinion); for a scale or lamellar cuirass (Munoz); or referring to leather armour (Oldenburg).

Detail from the early 5th-century Faenza mosaic, interpreted by some scholars as representing Priam begging Achilles for the body of Hector, but referring to Stilicho's victories over the Goths of Alaric and Radagaisius in 402–406. Note the Phrygian cap, decorated trousers, *mantion* fastened centrally with round brooch, and tunic with a central *clavus*. (Palazzo Mazzolani Faenza; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

Shield (*skildus)*

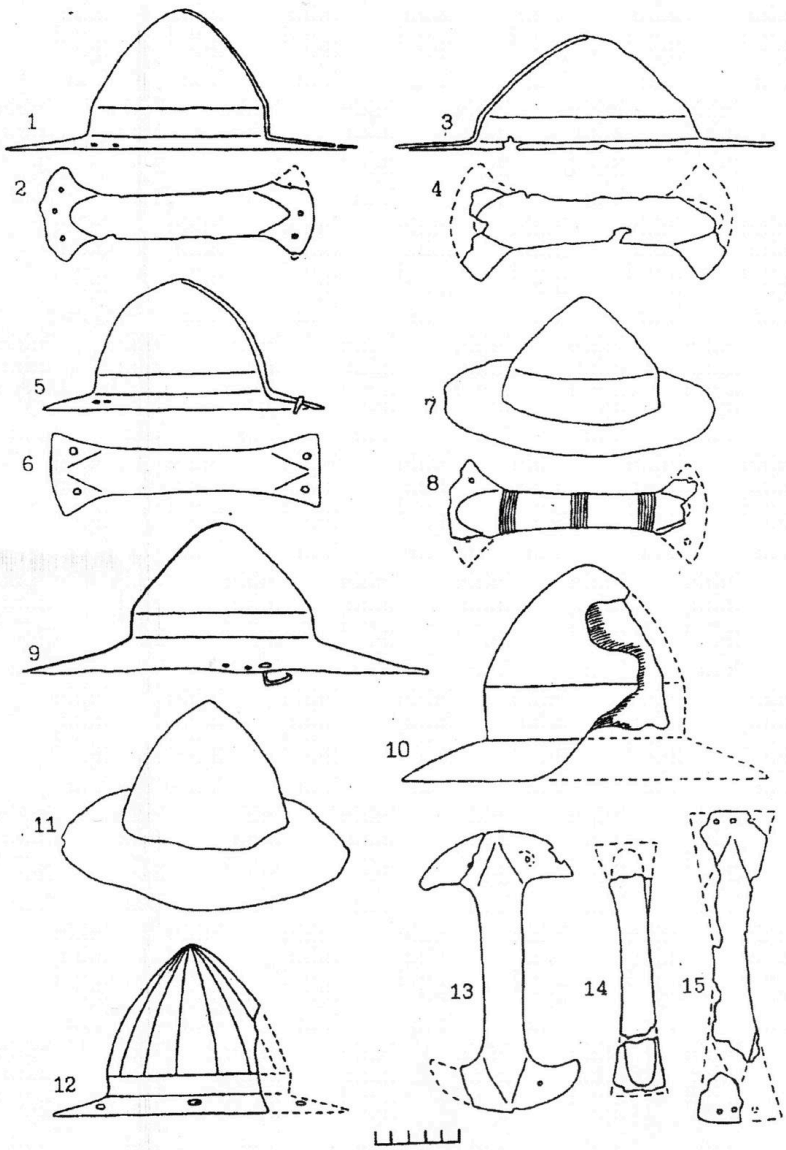
The shield was always the main defensive equipment of the Gothic warrior. As already mentioned, in the 1st century round Gothic shields are described by Tacitus (*Germ.*, 43, 6). They are attested in the Wielbark culture by finds of a few metal shield bosses (e.g. from Gronowo Gorne, Piła, and Nowe Dobra). North and east of the Black Sea a series of excavated graves of the Chernyakhov culture from the first half of the 3rd century contained metal bosses and handgrips; and in 3rd- and 4th-century burial grounds in Crimea, Abkhazia and others north-west of the Black Sea the deposition of shields in graves is widespread.

The 3rd-century Gothic shield is termed as being round in the Romano-Greek sources (Latin *scutum*, Greek *aspis*). They also mention its use held overhead by tight infantry formations in siege warfare (Dexipp von Athen, fragments 17a, 19), recalling the classic Roman *testudo*. Ammianus Marcellinus, a professional soldier, names the Gothic shield either *scutum* (perhaps meaning the rectangular type?) or *parma*, i.e. a smaller round type (AM, XXXI, 5, 12). Likewise, for both Ostrogothic and Spanish Visigothic shields, later Latin authors used the term *clipeus,* equivalent to the Greek *aspis* (Merobaudes, *Paneg.* II, 158; Cass., *Var.,* IV, 2. 2; Julian of Toledo, *Historiae Wambae regis*, 23)

Following Germanic tradition, most shields were large enough for use in the Goths' usual battle array: the shield-wall, which protected them from enemy missiles. Procopius describes this formation as allowing Ostrogothic infantry on several occasions to withstand both cavalry charges and Hunnic horse-archers (*BG* IV [VIII, 5, 19]; V, 18, 16, 29, 35). In (*BG,* V [XXII, 10] he calls the Gothic formation at Rome's Salarian gate a 'phalanx'.

Detail from the Faenza mosaic showing the discarded *lorica* of a Gothic chieftain, see reconstruction in **C3**. (Palazzo Mazzolani, Faenza, photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

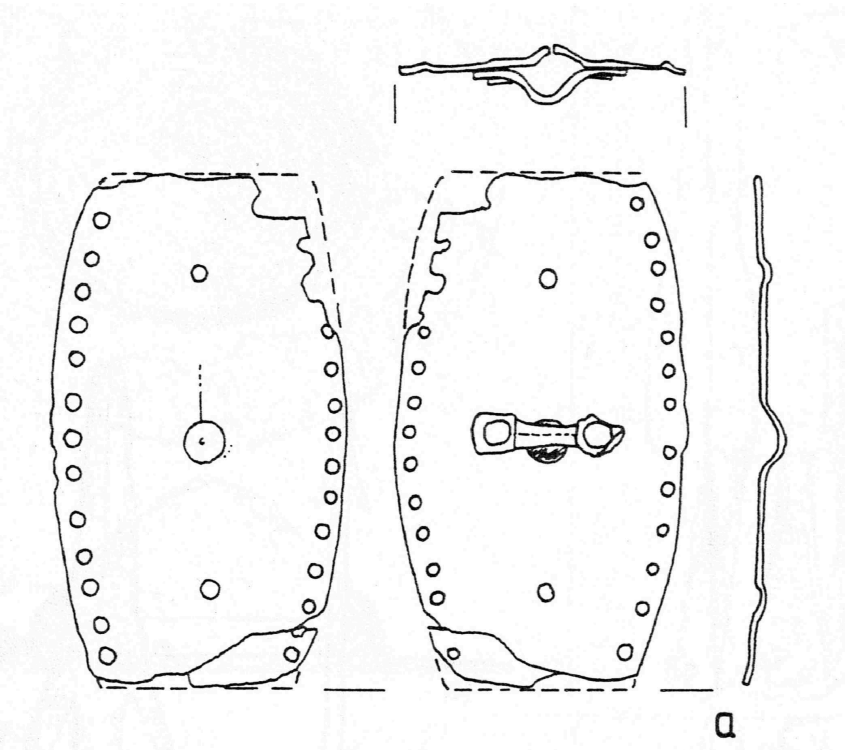
Other shields shapes are known, however. A Wielbark-culture grave at Nowy Targ shows a miniature elongated oval/ rectangular shape shield with curved sides, and one from Oselivka village had iron binding. Perhaps both round and rectangular shields co-existed, as suggested by a trophy of Gothic weapons in the Faenza mosaic. Visigoths on the Bosphorus and later under Alaric used larger shields, borrowed from the Romans. A tomb at Panticapaeum/ Kerch even yielded the remains of metal-plated hexagonal shields with a cylindrical-ogival boss fixed by large rivets, which Kazanski and other scholars assign to some East Roman workshop. A 'barbaric' shield of similar shape but decorated with cruciform metal appliqués is visible on the ivory Halberstadt Dyptich representing a victory of Constantius III (r. 421) over Visigoths, Alans and Vandals, together with other depictions of oval shape (see **Cantatorium of Halberstadt Cathedral, Domschatz um Dom St Stephanu**).



Gothic shield bosses and grips from the Chernyakhov culture, 3rd-4th centuries (top to bottom, left to right): **(1, 2)** from Kompanijci; **(3-4)** Tirgsor; **(5, 6)** Belen' koe (diam.17cm/ 6.7 ins; height 4cm/ 1.6 ins; grip length 16cm/6.3 ins); **(7, 8 & 11)** Malaesty; **(9)** Mogoçani; **(10)** Mediash; **(12)** Budeski, Romania; **(13)** Kurnicki; **(14)** Oselivka; **(15)** Aleksandrovka. Gilded late-4th to early-5th century examples have also been found in rich Bosphoran cities. The faceted example **(12)** resembles that shown on the Stilicho Dyptich of *c*.395. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex Magomedov-Levada).

It is not clear if the Gothic heavy cavalryman routinely carried a shield. Nefedkin correctly suggests that in the 4th century the Goths were influenced by the Sarmatians, who fought as mounted lancers without shields. Nevertheless, the fact that at the beginning of the battle of Taginae in 552 the mounted king Totila performed military exercises with his long lance held in both hands (*BG,* VIII [XXXI, 11–18]) does

not exclude his having a shield carried by a squire or slung from his horse harness. Procopius does note that Ostrogothic horsemen had no protection against Roman arrows. However, considering that the last Ostrogothic king, Teja, is described as being killed while he was changing shields at the battle of Mons Lactarius, it is certainly plausible that some elite horsemen carried them in pairs. The account centres on the fact that Teja's original round shield (ἀσπίδα) had been struck by 12 javelins of which at least some were still stuck in it, making it too unwieldy to use, so it must have been of significant size (*BG,* IV [VIII.35.22–29]).



Copper-alloy miniature shield from Nowy Targ in the territory of the Wielbark culture, 2nd to 3rd century, of the shape coinciding with the beginning of the Gothic migration southwards towards the Black Sea. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti ex Kokowski)

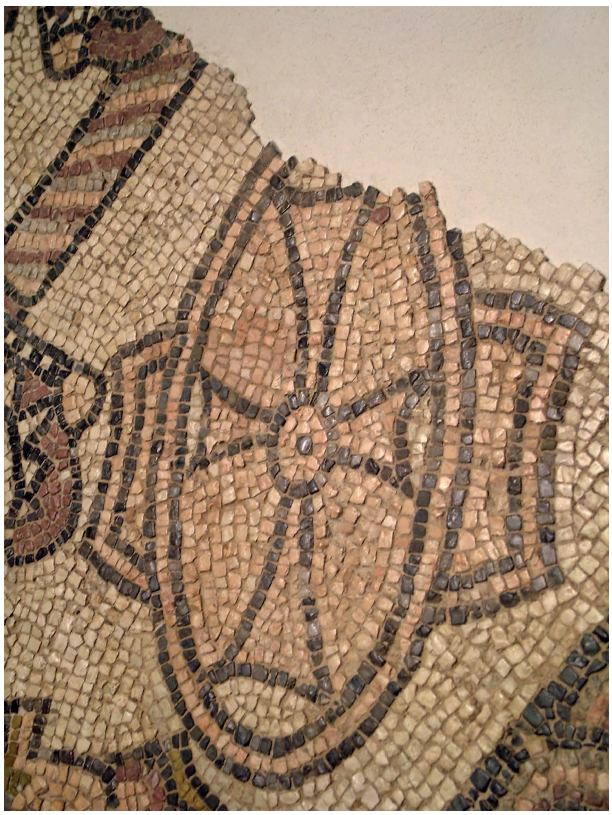
WEAPONS

Axes

From the Chernyakhov culture we have remains of axes with asymmetrical blades from the first half of the 4th century, although these had been popular among the Goths since long before that time.

Naturally, the frequent axe finds from Germanic sites lead archaeologists to discuss whether they are weapons or everyday tools (although larger examples of the latter could, of course, easily have served both purposes). Their use as weapons is well documented, particularly among the Franks but also in Gothic armies. The so-called *francisca* throwing-axe is found in graves in the Iberian peninsula; for example, a burial at Cueva de Los Goros yielded a curved-edge iron blade and the remains of its handle, together with a gilded belt clasp and part of a suspension hook perhaps from the belt. The development of the blade edge and the shaping of the handle place this find firmly in the 'combat' category. It measures 14cm (5.5 ins) long at the central axis; just over 10cm (*c*.4 ins) in height in the area of the blade; and the width of the upper part of the blade is 4cm (1.57 ins). In his study of Visigothic weapons, Azkarate has distinguished four different types of war axes of this category, characterized by local variations (this example being of his Type 4, and, to judge from the belt clasp, dating from the late 7th or early 8th centuries).

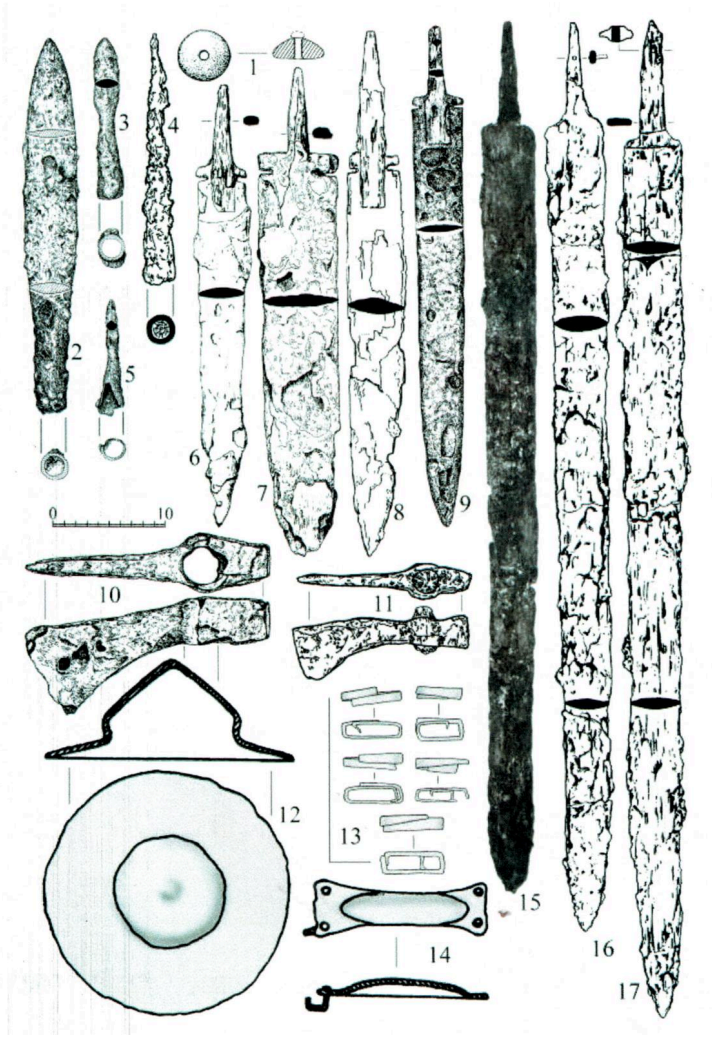
The remains of more Romano-Gothic hexagonal shields with gilded boss and rivets, *c.*400, were found in the necropolis of the ancient Bosphoran city on the site of modern Kerch, Crimea. (Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)



Detail of the early 5th-century Faenza mosaic, representing Visigothic shields thrown down at the feet of the Emperor Honorius. (Palazzo Mazzolani, Faenza; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

Swords (*meki*)

If at the beginning of their history Tacitus gives the Goths short swords (*breves gladii*), the long *spatha* was the weapon *par excellence* of the 3rd–4th century Gothic warrior (e.g. the specimens from Gródek and Kolomak). Of the shorter types, outstanding two-edged examples were recovered at Gronowo Gorne and at Piła, and four single-edged blades at Warszkowo and Walkowice (Wielbark culture). The most spectacular find is a sword complete with its ash-wood scabbard from a grave at Opalenie on the lower Vistula. From the early Chernyakov culture, swords from Jagnjatin and Złotów (type Biborski VI, AD 160–260) also confirm Tacitus's statement.



Gothic and/ or Alan weaponry dating from *c*.350–408, from burial grounds in south-western Crimea. (*Left to right*) Spear and javelin heads from Druzhnoe & Kilen-Balka; *semi-spathae* from same sites, and from Suvorovo; s*pathae* from Suvlu-Kaya & Neusatz. (*Lower left*) Axeheads from Druzhnoe & Kilen-Balka; shield boss and grip from Ozernoye. (Drawings and composition by Andrea Salimbeti ex Aibabin-Khairedinova, 2017)

In Crimea, swords from the Kerch Necropolis are the best evidence for the Gothic aristocracy being armed from Constantinople's workshops. The late 5th-century tombs of Tetraxite Gothic chieftains from the Djurso necropolis, near modern Novorossiysk, yielded beautiful swords of East Roman origin, as well as others with sheet metal inlays on the scabbard which indicate a Hunnic influence. In the Latin sources the swords of the Ostrogoths are called both *gladii* (Ennodius, *Eucharisticum de vita sua*, 20–21; 5–11, 303; *Anon. Val*., 11. 54); and *ensis,* meaning a blade of either length (*Pan.*, VII,29; VIII, 46, 34–35, 208).

Spanish: Visigothic axehead from Soto del Real, Sepultura de la Cerezuelo, and *dolabra* military pickaxe from Monte Rodiles, Selorio; 5th or 6th to 8th centuries. (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1973/34/4, 63563; photos courtesy *Mauranus Proyecto*)

Battle-axes from Ruscino in Septimania, southern Gaul, 7th–8th centuries. The defenders of Ruscino were subjects of the Visigothic kingdom, of Gallo-Roman or Germanic background, and strongly Germanized. Among other recovered weapons, Ruscino yielded important specimens of the *scramasax.* (Archaeological depot of Ruscino; photos courtesy of Dr Laurent Savarese)

In the Visigothic kingdom the sword was the foremost symbol of superior social class. Specimens from the 5th century, such as the Torrejón de Velasco find, clearly reflect Late Roman traditions, while those from the mid-6th to early 7th centuries – such as the *spathae* of Castiltierra (Segovia) or Daganzo de Arriba (Madrid) – are more similar to Merovingian or Alamannic examples. The Castiltierra sword was part of a funerary context including a silver buckle, and gold plates

decorating the baldric. The scabbards of such finds were of wood covered with leather, with chapes and fittings of silver or copper alloy, and handles might be made of oak.

Saxes (*hairus*) & knives

In Germanic burials the presence of knives is frequent, and it is logical to suppose that they were carried both as everyday tools and as secondary weapons. Among Visigothic warriors a Germanic weapon with a single-edged blade, the *sax* or *seax*, was typical, and was also used by provincial Roman and sub-Roman populations. In its *scramasax* version, as an alternative to the *semi-spatha* two-edged shortsword, it might measure between 30cm and 60cm (11.8 and 23.6 ins). Many examples have survived from Visigothic Spain, where it is mentioned among basic weaponry in Erwig's laws of the 680s. Recovered specimens from the late 7th and early 8th centuries – such as those from Pamplona, Cueva de Camino (Cantabria), La Vega, Cerro Muriano (Córdoba), Boadilla del Monte (Madrid), and Ruscino – are identical to the most common types documented in the burial grounds of northern France, and older examples come from Santa Maria La Real de Zarauz and Cueva de los Hornucos (Cantabria). Some Spanish finds are characterized by the central position of the tang on the axis of the weapon, in contrast to its being an extension of the back or blunt edge, as is commonly found in Italy.

Javelins, spears & lances

Throughout Gothic territories spears, both for throwing and thrusting, were commonplace. From the Wielbark culture, a rich urn cremation burial at Lekowo included the metal heads of shafted weapons alongside arrowheads and battle axes. In the Chernyakov culture, Kokowski has distinguished three main types of shafted weapons: (a) thrusting spears (specimens from Kompaniicy, Kobuska Veke, Sobar, Oselivka, Mogoşani, Iaşi-Nicolina, Zarnowiec, Uspenka and Perejaslav-Hmel'nickij); (b) javelins with smaller heads of lozenge section; and (c) a javelin head similar to the Roman *pilum* (Mława).

Hilt and guard of Romano-Gothic sword, 5th–6th centuries, with garnet and malachite inlay. This specimen belongs to a group of Eastern European blades found particularly in Crimea and in other Black Sea regions. Another striking example was found in the grave of a 5th-century Alan warrior at Lermontovskaia, north of the Caucasus in the Russian Federation; that guard was inlaid with coloured glass. (Photo courtesy of Timeline Auctions)

Sword crossguard, and fragmentary decorations from a shoulder belt and a scabbard. Illustrating gold, copper-alloy and garnet cloisonné inlay work of the second half of the 5th century, they are from the Bosphoran Kerch Necropolis vaults 163 & 176, and occasional finds from the Alexeev Collection. This style of decoration, in vogue into the first decades of the 6th century, has also been found on some rings and rectangular plates from buckles, as well as on scabbard plates and sword hilts. (Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg; photos Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)

In the 378 Adrianople campaign the Visigoths are described by Ammianus (XXXI, 7, 12) as armed with javelins (*verrutae*), as well as – intriguingly – throwing large fire-hardened clubs at a Roman *testudo* formation. At the end of that century Vegetius writes that barbed javelins were the principal weapon of the Goths' heavy infantry (*scutati pedites*), with each man carrying two or three of these *bebrae* into battle. The Visigoths long maintained the Germanic tradition of fighting on foot at close quarters, and it was only in Gaul and Spain in the 5th century that they deliberately developed a skirmishing force armed with missile weapons.

Archaeologists recovering spearheads have often puzzled over how to distinguish between examples for military and hunting use, but common sense suggests that a heavy spearhead on a strong shaft is equally effective against a bear or an armoured enemy. While there is clear iconographic evidence for the hunting use of the 'winged' or 'boar-spear' with lateral extensions below the blade, even this is also found in military contexts in the Late Roman world, often as part of a standard. Splendid examples pertinent to the Visigoths include the spear of the *Patricius Regius* of Bourges, a high Roman functionary of the Visigothic kingdom, and other specimens from Cabriana and Aldaieta.

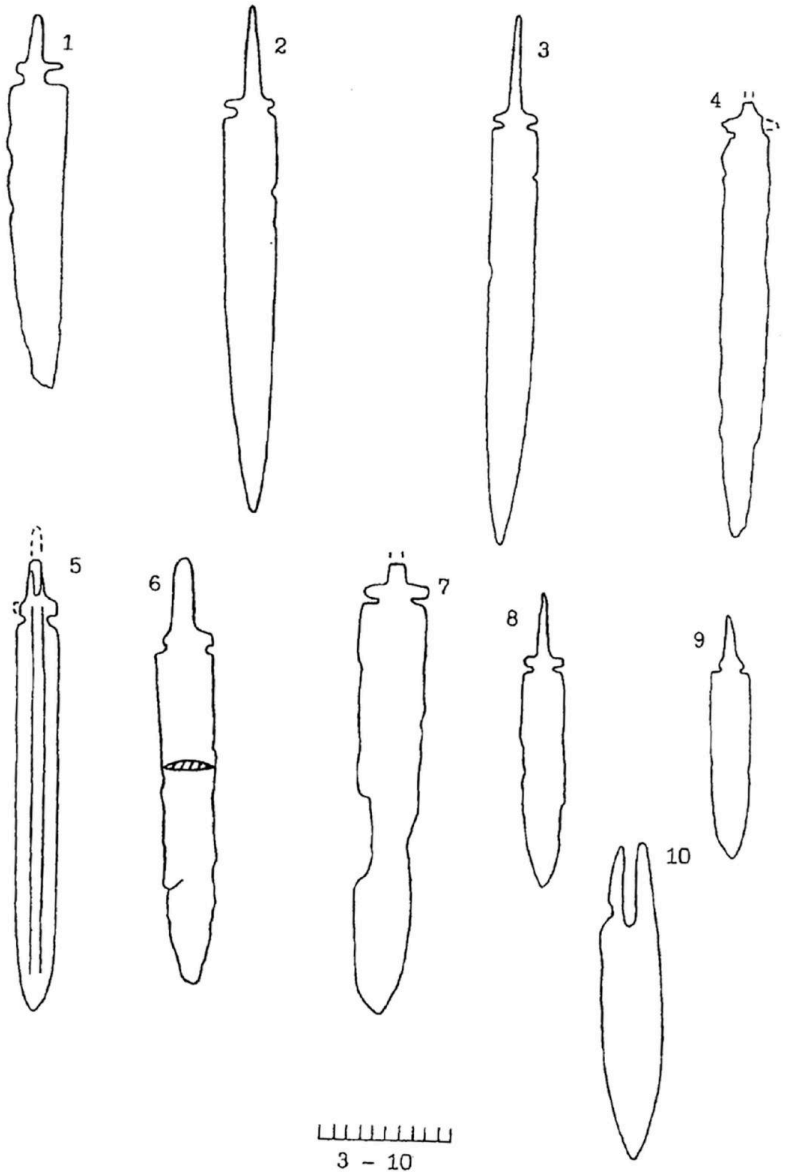
G VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM, 5th–7th CENTURIES AD

(1) Gallo-Roman *patricius*, 5th century

This Gallo-Roman aristocrat of recognized rank from Visigothic Provence is armed with a ‘winged’ spear, inlaid with gold and silver decoration. His costly *chlamys* and *tunica* are copied from Hispano-Roman mosaics (e.g. at Merida and Noheda). Various items of his equipment are copied from the Iberian finds of Valdetorres de Jarama and Tinto Juan de la Cruz, from which we also take elements of the still largely Roman horse harness.

(2) *Fidelis regis* warrior of royal bodyguard, 6th century
The *seniores Gothorum* formed an aristocratic army, whose core were warriors linked to the king by personal bonds of fidelity. They may have used leather armour or heavy ringmail, and oblong or circular shields with a central domed metal boss. The helmet was usually a *Spangenhelm*, and we copy this man’s sword from the Castiltierra specimen. The elements of his belt and *scramasax*-style battle knife are from Cacera de la Ranas (graves 24 and 60).

(3) Visigothic *comes*; Basque borders, 6th–7th centuries
Beneath his fur cape, as described by Sidonius Apollinaris, this Visigothic leader wears a Late Roman tunic. His military equipment – especially the spears, and the *cingulum* belt with silver fittings and a slung wooden box – is taken from specimens from the necropolis of Aldaieta. This is in a border area where sub-Roman Basques, Visigoths and Franks pursued almost continuous warfare, leading to interchanges of military gear. Note the Merovingian inlaid spurs, and the impressive *scramasax,* almost 2 feet long, from a find at Alcalá de Henares.



Double-edged blades of daggers and shortswords (*semi-spathae*) from the Chernyakhov culture, 4th to 5th centuries. Examples (8–10) at bottom right measure 19 & 23cm (7.5 & 9 ins); all the others are between 33 & 44cm (13 & 17.4 ins). According to M.B. Shchukin, the long dagger served as an auxiliary weapon for the left hand. Note that almost all these finds have cut-outs at the shoulders of the blade, presumably to trap an opponent's blade momentarily while striking him with a second weapon. Most of these daggers were found at south-western Chernyakhov locations. The type appeared in the North Caucasus in the 2nd or 3rd century, and was in use until *c*.530 (graves at Djurso). In the West, the latest dated finds seem to be from the mid-4th or early 5th centuries. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex Magomedov-Levada)

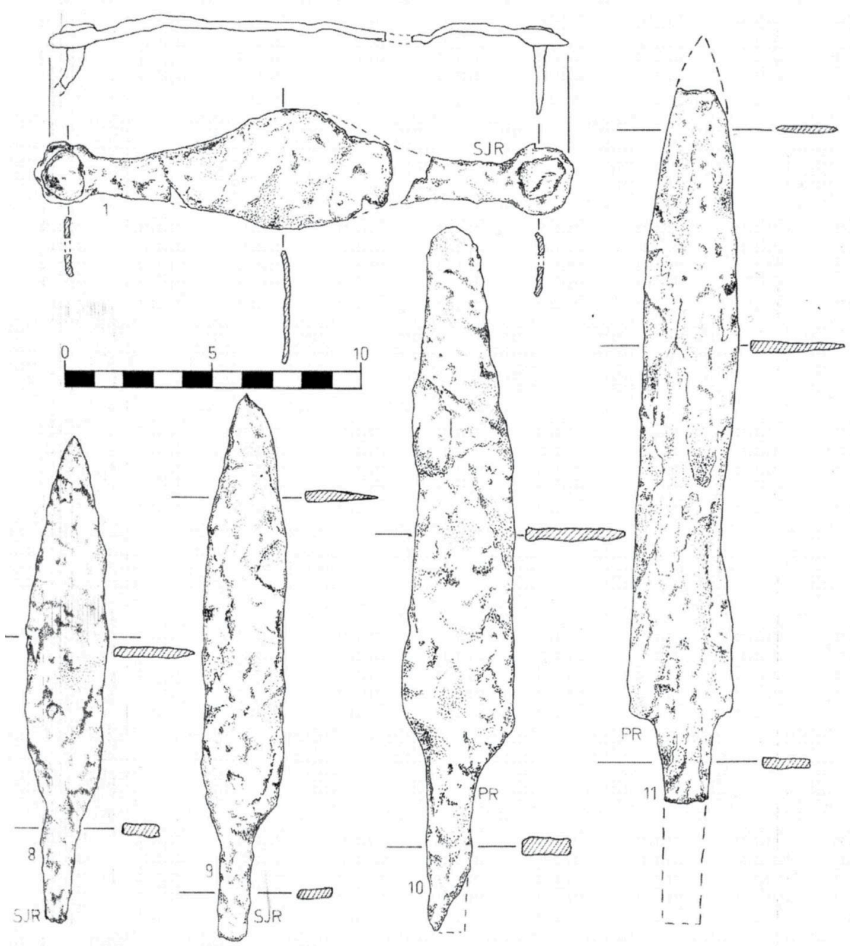
As already mentioned, the Ostrogothic cavalry developed under Sarmatian influence, and their characteristic weapons were long lances and swords. Jordanes (*Get.*, I, 261) remembers them fighting the Huns with lances at Nedao in 454. Procopius (*BP*, II, 18) describes them

among the Roman ranks in 541, charging in compact formation against the Persians: ‘For as the Goths … came upon them with long spears in close array ... the Persians did not await their attack but beat a hasty retreat. And the Romans together with the Goths followed them, and slew a hundred and fifty men’. The ‘long spear’ corresponds to the *kontos* lance of the Roman heavy cavalryman of the period, one of whom is shown on the Isola Rizza dish charging with his weapon held in both hands (see also above, under ‘Shields’). The frontal ‘shock’ attack was the prevailing Gothic tactic, especially during the battles of Justinian’s Italian wars – when the Goths sought to achieve a decisive result as quickly as possible – even if the ground or other circumstances did not favour this choice (*BG,* VIII, [XXIX, 25]).

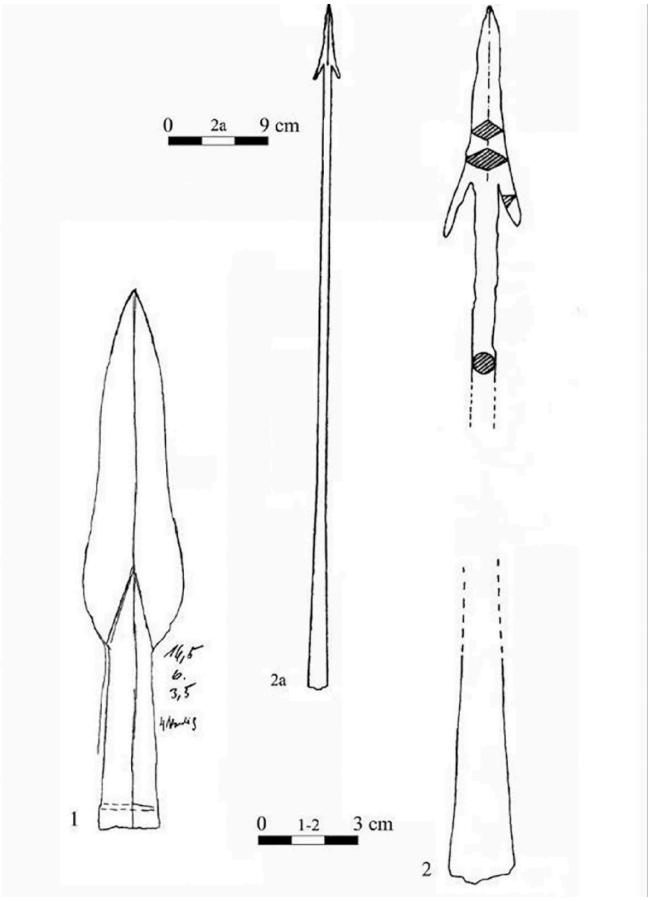
An alternative was the mounted use of javelins, for which the Goths were specifically trained (*Pan.*, XIX), using looped thongs to extend the throwing range. At the battle of Faenza in 541 Totila ordered 300 of his cavalry to pass around the Roman camp and to fall upon the enemy’s rear, harassing them with missiles at the right moment, and this tactic was decisive for the Gothic victory (*BG*, VII, 4, 16–21). Belisarius himself was the target of many Gothic warriors with javelins and other missiles (*ἀκόντια και τὰ ἄλλα βέλη*) during the battle for Rome (*BG*, V, [XVIII, 6–12]).

Bows & arrows

From the period of the Wielbark and Chernyakov cultures we have finds of both socketed arrowheads (lozenge-section, triangular or squared) and tanged examples (leaf-shaped, barbed, with short tangs). The bow might be carried in a combination bowcase/ quiver (*faretra*), but later sources show these as separate. The Goths’ use of dismounted archery may have been extended by their contacts with the Romans. At the time of Adrianople, Vegetius remembers that light-armoured Roman troops were often overwhelmed by showers of arrows in their engagements against the Goths (Veg., *Epit.,* I,19). However, Procopius states that, unlike the Huns and the Romans, the Goths did not have skilled mounted archers (*BG*., V [XXVII, 27]); their bowmen usually went into battle on foot, and under the cover of the heavy infantry.



A shield grip (top), and battle-knife blades from the important Visigothic sites of Santa Julia de Ramis *castellum* and Puig fort, 7th to 8th centuries. Here the right-hand blade (11) represents an important s*ax* find from Puig Rom. Its long blade (if complete, *c.*30.3cm/ 12 ins) has a wide, centred tang, and the cutting (right-hand) edge has a slight inward curvature (possibly the result of the fracture that broke off the tip). (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex García Jiménez and Vivó I Codina)



Scandinavian shafted weapons from the Wielbark culture, 3rd century: (left) Dörby type, from Borowo; (centre & right) from Mława. It was in this period that weapons began to diverge from the nearby Przeworsk culture and take on evident Scandinavian influences, such as spearheads from Żarnowiec, and this unique long, barbed *angon* head from Mława. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex Kontny, 2019)

Both sides of a late 2nd-century Gothic spearhead from the Chernyakov culture, found at Kovel in Ukraine (Volhynia). Prior to their contact with the Graeco-Roman world the Goths are believed to have been essentially illiterate, but runes are occasionally found, such as this interesting spearhead from their 'second emigration' period, which bears both runic inscriptions and Sarmatian *tamgas.* (ex Altheim, 1943, fig.65)

This does not imply that Gothic archers were typically limited to poorer warriors who could not afford better equipment. Bows were abundantly used in siege operations; to be effective they needed to carried by thoroughly trained men, and practice with the bow was part of the regular training of warriors. Of Theodoric's archers, Ennodius writes: 'These are men who early in life learned to kill as many of their enemies as they had arrows; they are not accustomed to spend the contents of their quivers carelessly against exotic beasts, nor to [shoot] missiles into the air; they will send off as many souls as [do the] spears.' During one of the mid-6th century sieges of Rome two Roman officers on the ramparts were hit in the face by Gothic bowmen,

suggesting skilled precision. Procopius seems to dispel any association of the bow with the lower classes when he tells us that an elite Gothic warrior, protected by a helmet and armour, climbed a tree outside the Salarian Gate to shoot arrows, only to be nailed to the trunk by a Roman *ballista* bolt.

Some Roman sources suggest that Gothic bows were inferior to Roman ones due to being more vulnerable to humidity. Whether or not this is true, Gothic archers were active, but less successful, in the naval battle of Senigallia (*BG.*, VIII, 23), and wet weather prevented them from fighting at the battle of Tagina.

Visigothic spearhead from the necropolis of Daganzo de Arriba, second half of 5th to second half of 6th century. (Museo de San Isidro, inv. no. CE1974/124/499, Ayuntamiento de Madrid; photo Miguel Ángel Otero, courtesy of the Museum)

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Horse harness

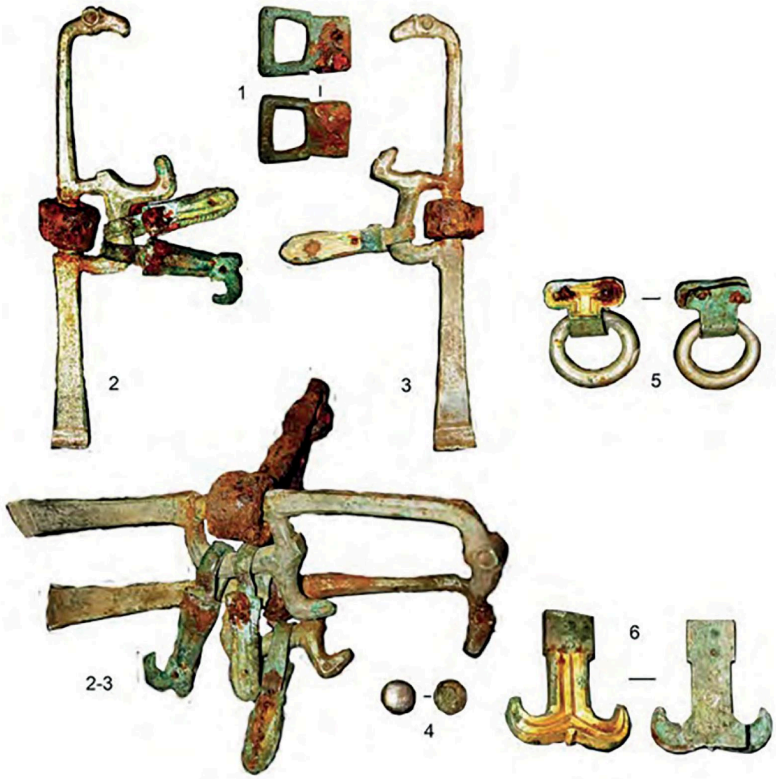
Some Wielbark-culture burials contain spurs, e.g. copper-alloy examples from the Czarnowko graves (second half of 1st century), and iron and decorative bronze inlay were associated in the production of spurs.

At least from the reign of Gratian (367–383), the Romans recognized the importance of Gothic cavalry. Vegetius (*Epitome,* I, 20) writes that 'following the example of the Goths, the Alans and the Huns, we have made some improvements in the arms of the cavalry'.

Beyond their basic functions, embellished bridle and saddle trappings were important status symbols among the barbarian elites, and it is clear that magnificent examples (such as that from Apahida) were made in the East Roman Empire but echoing nomad styles. Gothic harness fittings from the 5th century also show strong Hunnic influence (e.g. D-shaped elements on the front saddle arches) alongside Mediterranean components.

There is a clear mention of Ostrogothic horse-armour during Justinian's Gothic wars (*BG,* V [XVI, 10–11]): Wittiges, marching upon Rome to face Belisarius, is said to lead an army of both infantry and cavalry, and 'most of them, as well as their horses, were clad in armour'. No longer essentially mounted infantry like their ancestors, by the mid-6th century Gothic horsemen were thus becoming true cataphracts like their Roman opponents, riding mounts protected against missile weapons by equipment presumably issued from state armouries. Nefedkin suggests that the protection of their horses consisted of iron or felt chamfrons, peytrals and neck-guards.

Copper-alloy horse bit and *psalium*, *c*.450–500, from Krasnaya Polyana, Sochi Region, on the east coast of the Black Sea. (Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)



Gothic bridle and harness elements from the Klimovo complex. *c*.500. (**1**) Rein attachments; (**2 & 3**) Bit elements, (**2–3**) attached; note bird's-head terminals, typical of elite graves *c*.450–550 over the whole area between northern Sweden, France, and the Caucasus. (**4**) Decorative studs from reins or bridle. (**5 & 6**) Decorative pendants from front or rear harness straps. (Photo courtesy of Prof. Michael Kazanski)

Horse-harness *phalerae,* with decorations evoking the Classical world, have been preserved in Visigothic Spain. Some circular examples flanked the mouth of the horse as bit-fasteners, and are decorated with scenes of hunting animals such as boars (e.g. *phalera*

from Burgos, today in the Barcelona Museum). A squared loop attached them to the bridle's muzzle strap.

Standards & trumpets

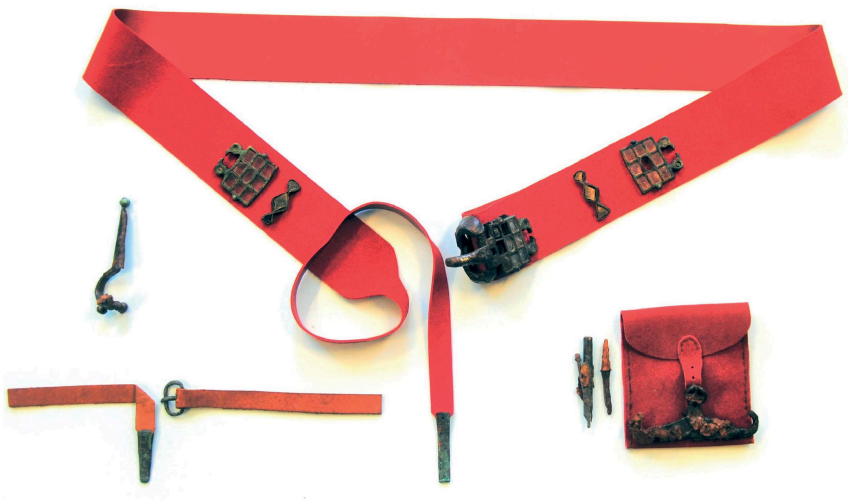
Gothic standards are referred to by the Roman term *signa* in the Latin sources. From the 3rd century the Goths, like the Romans, carried *dracones* as standards. Procopius describes Totila going to war followed by his standard. Both Visigothic and Ostrogothic armies used war-trumpets (*Pan.,* VIII, 39: *cum bellicum cecinerunt classica),* specifically the Roman *bucina* (AM, XXXI, 15, 13; *Pan*., VIII, 41), the *tuba* (*Pan.,* XII, 60), and the *lituus*.

Siege equipment

With their conquest of Italy the Ostrogoths developed means of positional warfare borrowed from the Romans. Procopius mentions several sieges during the Romano-Gothic Wars of the 530s–550s; Ostrogothic siege techniques were the most developed among the Germanic populations of this period, but their failed sieges of Rome indicate that they had not fully mastered them (*BG,* V [XIX,1–5]).

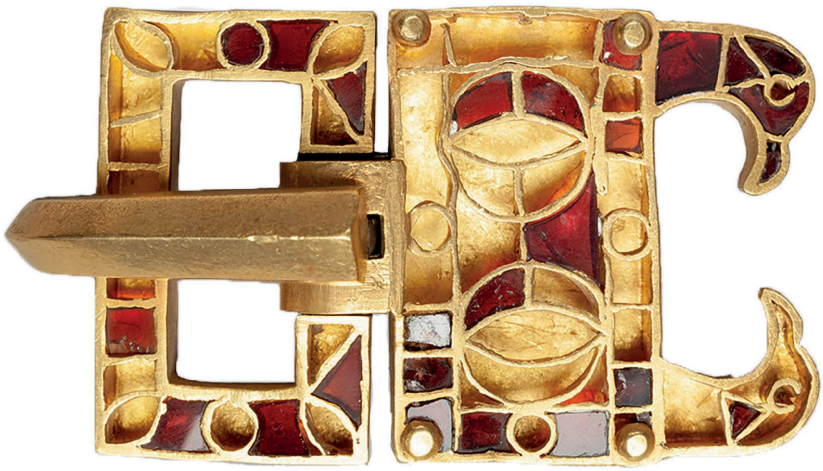
In 537 the Goths built seven siege camps, protected by deep ditches, high earth ramparts and sharpened stakes (*BG*, V [XIX, 11–18]), but were nevertheless unable to complete a blockade-perimeter around the city. They built catapults including *onagers,* four mobile battering rams, scaling ladders, and mobile siege towers fitted with wheels, equal in height to Rome's walls (*BG*, V [XX, 19–21; XXII,11–13]); they also used fascines of brushwood and reeds to fill in Roman ditches and allow these engines to approach the walls. In March 537 they advanced their towers by means of ox-teams, but these were easily killed by the Roman archers. This lesson was learned; at the siege of Ariminium (Rimini) in 538 the Goths used a wooden tower pulled by teams of men (presumably sheltered by mobile 'tortoise' sheds) and covered by archers inside the structure, but again unsuccessfully.

Detail from the Barberini Dyptich, late 5th or early 6th century, representing Ostrogothic warriors bearing gifts to the Roman Emperor. The Phrygian caps and facial hair are clear, as are what seem to be capes blowing back behind the shoulders. Note the decorative bands on the tunics and trousers, bearing what may be lozenge patterns. On the tunic they pass around the neck and centrally down the front; across the shoulders and down the upper sleeves; and around the sleeves above the elbow and at the wrist. The trousers have bands down the front of the legs and around the ankles. (Photo courtesy of Wikipedia commons)



Reconstructed belt of a Gothic officer of Theodoric's army, from finds at Globasnitz, Austria. This Ostrogothic officer, perhaps of Frankish origin, was found dressed in a tunic gathered by a narrow red fabric belt with buckle and end-tab (lower left); a cloak fastened with a 'bow' brooch on the right shoulder (middle left); and a magnificent military *cingulum* (centre). Parts of the latter were recovered in good condition, including an iron buckle with silver and brass inlay, bearing an Arian Christian cross on its claw, and attached to the hinges of a bronze eagle-head plaque inlaid with transparent glass. The belt had two similar separate plaques, and two triple bronze

fittings with yellow glass inlay. The fastener of the purse (bottom right) also survived. (Courtesy of Archäologisches Pilgermuseum, Globasnitz; photo F. Glaser)



Gold buckle plate probably from an elite Ostrogothic warrior's military belt, decorated with garnets in cloisonné settings. This 6th-century find is from Landriano (Pavia). Its eagle-head terminals reflect the not-uncommon survival among Germanic warriors of pre-Christian symbolism. (Milano, Civiche Raccolte Archeologiche e Numismatiche, inv. n. A.0.9. 6349)

Procopius gives a detailed description of the Gothic battering rams. They were slung inside wheeled timber-framed sheds covered with wet ox-hides as protection for the 50-strong crew against missiles and fire. The iron-headed beam of the ram was suspended on chains, and pulled back for swinging by means of a rotating mechanism (*BG*, V [XXI, 6–13]).

The defenders shattered scaling ladders raised against their walls by dropping heavy stones (including, reportedly, even statues taken from Hadrian's Mausoleum), and they made numerous sorties to destroy the Gothic catapults. When they did manage to take cities the Goths sometimes showed mercy, but on other occasions were implacable. In 539 they captured and ruthlessly sacked Milan, massacring male citizens and handing the women over to their Burgundian allies; the city's Praetorian prefect, Reparatus, was torn to pieces and his remains were fed to the dogs.

Naval equipment

The conquest of northern Black Sea ports such as Tyras and Olbia in 257–258 allowed the Goths to assemble a large fleet able to reach the

coasts of Asia Minor (modern northern Anatolia, Turkey). Their ancestral familiarity with the Baltic Sea, with which they still had strong relationships, made them skilled sailors, and they reached and plundered Crete and Cyprus. The typical Mediterranean warship of the 5th–6th centuries was the *dromon* as used by the Roman navy; this was a full-decked galley with a single bank of perhaps 25 oars on a side, increasingly supplemented over the passage of time by lateen sails on one or more masts, and with the old underwater bow ram replaced by a spur above the waterline level with the enemy's rowing benches.

Cassiodorus tells us that after Theodoric's initial failure to take Ravenna the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy acquired a substantial fleet of *dromones,* which were employed widely (but with only occasional success) during the Romano-Gothic Wars. Wittiges shipped an expeditionary force of Goths and Suebi commanded by Asinarius and Uligisalus to capture the Roman city of Salona in Dalmatia (*BG* V [XVI-7-21]). They constructed a stockade around the outside of Salona's walls, while blockading the sea approach with ships filled with troops. However, the fleet was attacked by a Roman force which put them to flight, sinking and/ or capturing many galleys.

Fragment of an Imperial diptych of the mid 5th century. On the left, behind a barbarian being speared by a winged Victory, stands another warrior with his hair cut in Gothic style. From the long, hanging sleeves rendered with the same surface effect as the torso, it has been suggested that he might be wearing a fur jacket slung over his shoulders as a winter overgarment. (Library of Hamburg, donation Gosu; ex Volbach 1952, pl.12, 46)

Gothic/ East Roman gold and silver *fibulae*, cross-shaped and decorated with garnets, dating from the late 5th century. This highly distinctive group of cloak-brooches appear to have originated in Gothic workshops on the Black Sea, where they have been found in several graves. Some features, notably the 'high-collared' settings for the gemstones, employing beaded wire and U-shaped filigree, nevertheless link their production to Constantinople. (Ferrell Collection; photos courtesy of James E. Ferrell)

Totila was able to collect, in the Tyhrrenian Sea, a powerful fleet reportedly of 400 vessels, composed of *dromones*, small *liburnes* and *monoremes*, which had mainly been captured from the East Romans and were partly manned by Italic sailors. With this force he was able to defeat the Roman commander Demetrius's navy along the Campanian coast, and he also employed light vessels during his successful conquest of Rome in 550 (*BG*,VII,36).

APPEARANCE

Physique

A detailed description of the Goths is given by Procopius (*BV,* III, 2 [II.2–5]). After listing the most important Germanic nations, including the Goths, he states that all of them have pale complexions and fair hair, and are tall and handsome. Ennodius writes of Theodoric (*Pan.,* XXI): 'your stature is such that by your height you announce [yourself to be] the sovereign'. However, as always, we must remember that 'tall' in the ancient world did not mean the same as it does today. In some Visigothic male burials on the Iberian Peninsula the average height was 1.65m (*c*.5 ft 5 ins), although we must allow for the presence there of a mixed population. The Ostrogoths are described with beards ('… white ice coated their hair, so that hoary locks became entangled in beards'). We may surely believe that Goths displayed the warrior bearing typical of a people for whom physical strength and prowess in battle were the foundation of personal status.

A small minority of Ostrogothic burials (in the Globasnitz necropolis in Carinthia, modern Austria, and a double burial in Collegno, Turin) show a significant variation from the norm: the deliberate deformation of the skull by binding the head from infancy. This elongation and heightening of the cranium was a typical Hunnic practice, denoting social distinction, and we must recall that from the late 4th century many Goths fell under the domination of the Huns. While one of the relevant Globasnitz graves was that of a woman, others can be identified by deposited objects as aristocratic Ostrogothic warriors, and by skeletal analysis as lifelong horse-riders.

CLOTHING:

Caps, tunics & trousers

The ‘Phrygian’ cap is the characteristic headgear of the Goths depicted on Late Antique monuments. The Ludovisi Sarcophagus, the base of Theodosius’s Column and Imperial dyptichs all allow us to recognize Gothic warriors from this item, perhaps copied from the late Scythians with whom they had shared the Black Sea steppes.

This magnificent gold eagle-headed *fibula*, encrusted with semi-precious stones, is from the ‘Petrossa’ or ‘Pietroasele treasure’, a hoard of 22 gold objects found in 1837 near Bukău, Romania. Of Eastern Roman manufacture, and dating from between the late 4th and mid-5th century, it must have been destined for a Gothic chieftain of high status. Suspension rings on the reverse suggest that it originally had two sets of four pendants, the other set to hang down the back of the wearer’s shoulder. Compare with **Plate D1**. (National Museum of History of Romania, Bucharest, inv. 11431; painting ex Odobescu, 1889–1900)

Male dress consisted mainly of a knee-length shirt or tunic worn over trousers. The *Strategikon* of Maurice mentions, for the infantry, Gothic tunics (*zostaria: Strat.,* XII, B2). Of Germanic origin, these distinctive elements of Gothic dress were widely introduced in the Roman army in the late 5th–early 6th centuries, and are visible on Theodosian monuments representing Gothic warriors. The term means 'closed by belts', and mosaics and ivories of the 6th–early 7th centuries show tunics of such types often worn together with the composite belts which were distinctive of the military status of Roman and Germanic soldiers.

Dated to *c.*500, remains of woollen tunics were found in the graves of Ostrogothic warriors at Globasnitz in Roman Noricum. A cloisonné buckle from Dertona/ Tortona attests the high social status of the wearer, further confirmed from remnants of textile on the back of the buckle: a particularly refined cloth, both for weave and fineness of the thread, which is probably silk. Traces of wool and possibly linen textiles from several tombs in the Visigothic necropolis of Castiltierra in Spain remained attached to or imprinted on belt clasps and *fibulae.* Iconographic sources from the 5th and 6th centuries (e.g. see photographs from the Barberini dyptich, **5th- or early 6th-century Barberini Dyptich representing Ostrogothic warriors** & **Barberini Dyptich, late 5th or early 6th century**) show decoration on the tunics and trousers: applied bands of embroidery or tablet-weaving across the shoulders, at the neck and down the front, and vertically and horizontally on the limbs. Conventionally, such decoration could be interpreted as showing the Persian influence on the Late Roman army. Other pictorial sources suggest densely patterned materials.

Cloaks

Male graves of the Wielbark culture often contain brooches for fastening cloaks, usually one specimen per grave. Wielbark deposits have also yielded fragments of textiles, mostly in wool. A fine wool cloak was recovered at Gronowo; woven in a white and brown check pattern (the brown colour obtained using tannin), it had an elaborate tablet-woven border and a fringed edge (compare **Plate A1**). Tunics and cloaks were woven by the women (*Pan*., VI, 26) and embroidered (*elaboratas vestes; Pan.,* VIII, 44). Synesius also mentions Gothic

leaders in Constantinople ‘dressed in the skins of beasts and sheep’. According to Sidonius Apollinaris, the edge of the *pelliti* (‘pelted’) Visigoths’ outer garment ‘does not reach the calf’, i.e. it was no longer than the tunic; this implies a short semicircular cloak, opening down the front. The arrival of Ostrogothic garrison troops on the Bosphorus in 528–530 led to a fashion in Crimea for a new type of ‘bow’ *fibulae.*

Belts

Military belts were an important symbol for Gothic warriors. A characteristic feature of the tombs of Arian Christian Ostrogoths was the absence of weapons, but not of other military elements of the male costume. The finds from Globasnitz are precious testimony of the Gothic occupants of fortified settlements in the Alpine areas, and of military hierarchy during Theodoric’s reign.

The finest buckles and belt-fittings among grave finds are of gold and garnet cloisonné work, but of particular interest are those incorporating rounded or oval elements of rock-crystal or sepiolite (*meerschaum*), which are sometimes associated with cloisonné plaques. From their relative position in high-status graves many buckles seem to be from secondary sword-suspension straps. Buckles in iron, copper alloy and silver, with varying engraved or inlaid decoration and fixation rivets have allowed detailed classification. The quartering of soldiers in cities implied the presence of high-ranking Goths who would undoubtedly have worn prestigious belts. As was the case in highly hierarchical Byzantium, it is even possible that in the Gothic context there was some sort of ‘code’ for belts to distinguish the owner’s particular status.

H VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM, 7th–8th CENTURIES AD

(1) Hispano-Roman infantryman, 7th–8th centuries

After the introduction of military service laws by kings Wamba and Erwig, the servants of the aristocracy and peasant light troops were destined to form the *hostis*, an army mainly recruited from the Hispano-Roman population. This light infantryman, whose costume is mainly copied from the *Pentateuch* of Ashburnham, is very fully armed with a long spear, a short recurved bow with a slung quiver, and an important specimen of *scramasax* from the finds at Sant Julià de Ramis and Puig. Note the interior of the small *parma* shield.

(2) Heavy cavalryman; Septimania, early 8th century
This cavalryman from Visigothic Provence is protected by a leather *galea* helmet reinforced with iron elements from the Aldaieta necropolis, and lamellar armour from fragments found in Ruscino. His equipment resembles that of Late Roman cavalry, though with Germanic elements. Among these are the *scramasax*, and the shield with an extended conical *umbo* which anticipates Carolingian types; he might also carry a war-axe slung on his right. His horse's harness is of northern Visigothic origin.

(3) Royal bodyguard of *Gardingi*, 7th–8th centuries
The superior equipment of this royal guardsman includes a rare specimen of *Spangenhelm* from a private collection; a ringmail *lorica;* a *scramasax* (from a find at Cueto de Camino), belt elements in gilded copper alloy, and, as his main weapon, the splendid sword specimen from Conimbriga. The complicated emblem on the shield is reconstructed from the iconography of the Narbona plaque.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Initial abbreviations in brackets at beginning of entries are those used for in-text source references.

ANCIENT SOURCES
including scholarly commentaries

(MH) Agathias, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum, Libri Quinque*, (ed.) Niebuhrius, B.G., in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (CSHB) III* (Bonn, 1828)

(AGN) Agnellus, in *Monumenta Germanica Historia* (MGH) AA IX, *Chronica Minora I,* (ed.) Mommsen, Th. (Berlin, 1892 & 1961) pp. 273–336

(AM) Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* (The Histories), Latin text & English trans. Rolfe, J.C. (Loeb Classical Library, 3 vols; London, 1939–1950)

Ammien Marcellin, Jordanes, *Frontin (les Stratagèmes), Végèce, Modestus,* (ed.) Nisard, M. (Paris, 1878)

(*Anon. Val.*) *Anonymous Valesianus*, in MHG AA IX, *Chronica Minora I;* (ed.) Mommsen, Th. (Berlin, 1892) pp. 259–329

Blockley, R.C., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool, 1983)

Burgess, R.W., *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1993)

Burgess, R., 'The Gallic Chronicle of 452: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction', in Mathisen, R. W. & Shanzer, D. (eds.), *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources (*Aldershot, 2001) pp. 52–100

(Claud., Bell. Goth.) *Claudianus, Il rapimento di Proserpina, La guerra dei Goti* (Milan, 1981)

(Cass.*, Var.*) Cassiodorus, *Variae*, (trans. & ed.) Barnish, S.J.B. (Liverpool, 1992)

(Cass., *Var.*) Cassiodorus, *The Selected Letters from Cassiodorus, A Sixth Century Sourcebook*, (trans. & ed.) Bjornlie, M.S. (Oakland,

2020)
(CHP) *Continuatio Havnensis Prosperi,* in MHG AA IX, *Chronica Minora I*, (ed.) Mommsen, Th. (Berlin, 1892) pp. 266–339
'Continuatio Isidoriana Hispana Cronica Mozarabe de 754'. *Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa* 127, (ed.) Lopez Pereira, J. E. (León, 2009)
(CSHB) Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae: Merobaudes et Corippus (Bonn, 1836)
Dexipp von Athen Edition, Übersetzung und begleitende Studien, (ed.) Martin, G. (Tübingen, 2006)
(Dio Cass.) Dio Cassius, *Romaika* (Roman History)*,* Greek & English text (Loeb Classical Library, 9 vols; Harvard University Press, 1914–1927)
Ennodius, *Opera* (Works), in MGH AA VII (Berlin, 1885/ 1861)
(*V. Epiph.*) Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani* (The Life of Saint Epiphanus), (trans., intro., comm.) Cook, G. (Washington DC; Catholic University of America Press, 1942)
(Pan.) *Ennodius, Panegyric to Theoderic the Great, A Translation and Commentary*, Haase, B.S. (Ottawa, 1991)
(In Nat. Laur.) Ennodius, In Natale Laurentius Mediolanensis
Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History – A History of the Church in Six Books from AD 431 to AD 594* (London, 1846)
Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, (ed.) Bidez, J. & Parmentier, L. (Amsterdam, 1964)
Fast.Vind. Prior, in MHG AA IX, *Chronica Minora I,* (ed.) Mommsen, Th. (Berlin, 1892) pp. 274–320
Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, (trans. & intro) Lewis Thorpe (London, 1974)
Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, (ed.) Van Dam, R., (Liverpool, 2004)
(Herod.) Herodian, *Ab excessu divi Marci libri octo*, (ed.) Stavenhagen, K. (Leipzig; Teubner, 1922)
(Herod.) *Herodian of Antioch's History of the Roman Empire*, (ed.) Echols, E.C. (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1961)
Historici Graeci Minores, ed. Dindorfius, L., Vols I–II (Leipzig, 1870–1871)

Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis opera: Isidori hispalensis versus,* (ed.) Sánchez Martín, J. S. (*Corpus Christianorum*, 113 a) (Turnhout; Brepols, 2000)
Isidore of Seville, *The Etimologies of Isidore of Seville*, (eds.) Barney S.A., Lewis,W. & Beach, J.A. (Cambridge, 2006)
(FHG) John of Antioch, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* IV–V, (ed.) Müller, C. (Paris, 1883)
Iohannis Antiocheni fragmenta quae supersunt omnia, (ed.) Mariev, S., in CFHB, XLVII (Berlin, 2008)
(*Get.*) Jordanes, *Getica*, (ed.) Mommsen, Th., in MGH AA V/1 (Berlin, 1882); English trans. in Mierow, C.C. *The Gothic History of Jordanes: In English with an Introduction and a Commentary* (Princeton, 1915/ 2006)
Jordanes: Romana and Getica, (eds.) Van Nuffelen, P. & Van Hoof, L. (Liverpool, 2020)
Julian of Toledo, Iuliani Toletanae, *Historia Wambae regis*, (ed.) Levison, W.I, in MGM Scriptores rerurn Merovingicarum, T.I. Hannoverae (Leipzig, 1910) pp. 486–535
The Story of Wamba: Julian of Toledo's Historia Wambae, (ed.) Martinez Pizzarro, J., (Washington DC; Catholic University of America Press, 2005)
(LV) *Leges Visigothorum*, (ed.) Zeumer, K., in MGH Legum sectio I: Leges nationum Germanicarum, T. I. Hannoverae (Leipzig, 1902)
Malalas, Iohannes, *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, (eds.) Jeffreys, E., Jeffreys, M. & Scott, R. (Melbourne, 1986)
Malchus (see Blockley, R.C., above) pp. 402–462
(Marc., *Chron*.) Marcellinus, *Chronicon*, in MHG AA XI, *Chronica Minora II*, (ed.) Mommsen, Th. (Berlin, 1894/1961) pp. 37–108
The Chronicle of Marcellinus, (ed., trans. & comm) Croke, B. (Sydney, 1995) Maricq, A., *'Res Gestae Divi Saporis'*, in *Syria* 35 (1958) pp. 295–360
F1. Merobaudis, Panegyricus I1, (ed.) Vollmer, F., in MHG AA XIV (Berlin, 1905) pp. 11–18
Flavius Merobaudes, A Translation and Historical Commentary, (ed.) Clover, E. (Philadelphia, 1971)
Notitia Dignitatum, accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et laterculi Provinciarum, (ed.) Seeck, O. (Berlin, 1876)

Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, (trans.) Fear, A.T. (Liverpool University Press, 2010)
(Paul. Diac.) Paolo Diacono (Paul the Deacon), *Historia Romana*, (ed.) Crivellucci, A. (Rome, 1914)
Procopius, *De Bellis* ('History of the Wars'); see footnote, page 10. All ed. Dewing, H.B. (Loeb Classical Library, London & Harvard University Press). *Books I–II* (1914/ 1996); *Books III–IV* (1916/ 2000); *Books V–VI, 15* (1919/ 1993); *Books VI, 16–VII, 15* (1914/ 1992); *Books VII, 36–VIII* (1928/ 1992). Text refs: (*BP*) = *Persian War;* (*BV*) = *Vandal War;* and *(BG*) = *Gothic War.*
Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo* ('Going Home'), (ed.) Malamud, M., (Routledge, 2016)
(SHA) *Scriptores Historia Augusta: Marcus Aurelius*, *Claudius II,* (trans.) Magie, D., in *Historia Augusta,* 3 vols (Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1921–1932)
Sidonius Apollinaris, in Migne, J. P., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus,* Latin Series, Vol. XVIII (1844)
Sidonius, *Poems and Letters,* (ed.) Anderson, W.B., 2 vols (Harvard University Press, 1963)
(*Geo.*) Strabo, *Geographica*, Vol .VII, (ed.) Roller, D.V. (Cambridge University Press, 2015)
(Strat.) *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, (ed.) Dennis, G. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae; Vienna, 1981)
(*Germ.*) Tacitus, *Dialogus, Agricola, Germania* (Loeb Classical Library; London, 1914)
Theophanes, *Chronographia*, in CSHB, Vol. I (Bonn, 1834)
The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813, (eds.) Mango, C. & Scott, R. (Oxford University Press, 1997)
(Veg., *Epit.*) Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, (ed.) Milner, N.P. (Liverpool, 1993)
Vergilius Romanus (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Lat. 3867, facsimile edition; Zurich, 1985)
Zosimus, *Historia Nova* (New History) (London, 1814)

MODERN WORKS

Aibabin, A.I., & Khairedinova, E.A., *Crimean Goths in the Region of Dory, mid-Third to Seventh Century* (Simferopol, 2017)

Aimone, M., *The Wyvern Collection: Byzantine and Sassanian Silver, Enamels and Works of Art* (London, 2020)

Arnold, J., Bjornlie, S. & Sessa, K. (eds.), *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy* (Leiden, 2016) pp. 173–199

Azkarate Garai-Olaun, A. & García Camino, I., *Vasconia, Tierra Intermedia, Ritos funerarios de frontera* (Álava, 2013)

Barroso Cabrera, R. & Morin de Pablos, J., 'Armas en la arqueología madrileña de la Antigüedad tardía' in *Zona arqueológica,* no.8 (3, 2006) pp.733–745

Behmer, E., *Das zweischneidige Schwertder germanischen Völkerwanderungszeit* (Stockholm, 1939)

Bierbrauer, V., *Die Ostgotischen Grab- und Schatzfunde in Italien – Biblioteca Studi Medievali VII* (Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo; Spoleto, 1975)

Bierbrauer, V., Von Hessen, O. & Arslan, E.A. (eds.), *I Goti* (Milan, 1980)

Boss, R., et al, *Justinian's Wars: Belisarius, Narses and the Reconquest of the West* (Stockport, 1993)

Catalán Ramos, R., 'El Armamento de época visigoda, de las llanuras de Aquitania a la laguna de La Janda', in *Desperta Ferro – Ejércitos medievales hispánicos (I), Los Visigodos,* numero especial XXIII (June 2020)

Cieslinski, A., *The Society of Wielbark Culture, AD 1–300 / Past Societies 500 BC–AD 500* (Warsaw, 2016)

D'Amato, R. & Pflaum, V., 'Two suits of lamellar armour from Kranj (Carnium), Slovenia… etc', in *Acta Militaria Medievalia* XV (Kraków–Sanok–Wrocław, 2019) pp. 7–50

Delbrueck, R., *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler – Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte, 2* (Berlin & Leipzig, 1929)

D'Ilario, R., *L'elmo longobardo di Montepagano*, (Roseto degli Abruzzi, 1983)

Dohijo, E., ‘La necrópolis hispanovisigoda del área foral de Termes’, in *PYRENAE*, 38, Vol. 1 (2007) pp. 129–162
Gallegos Vázquez, F., ‘El ejército visigodo: el primer ejército español’, in Martínez Peñas, L. & Fernández Rodríguez, M., *Reflexiones sobre poder, guerra y religión en la Historia de España* (2011), pp. 15–56
García Jiménez, G. & Vivó I Codina, D., ‘Sant Julià de Ramis y Puig Rom: dos ejemplos de yacimientos con armamento y equipamiento militar visigodo en el noreste peninsular’, in *Gladius* XXIII (2003) pp.161–190
Gorelik, M., *Warriors of Eurasia* (Stockport, 1998)
Gosserez, L., ‘Le diptyque Carrand: La conversion des païens et l’idéologie impériale du Ve siècle’, in *Revue d ’études augustiniennes et patristiques,* 51 (2005), pp.109–126
Halsall, G., ‘The Ostrogothic Military’, in Arnold, J., Bjornlie, S. & Sessa, K., (eds.), *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy* (Leiden, 2016) pp. 173–199
Heath, I., *Armies of the Dark Ages, 600–1066 AD* (Worthing, 1980)
Heather, P., *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996)
Hidalgo Prieto, R., ‘Casting mould with relief of armed horseman from Cordoba’, in *Gladius* XXXII (2012), pp. 69–86
Hierro Garate, J.Á., ‘La panoplia en época visigoda (siglos VII–VIII) en la Península Ibérica y Septimania’, in *Covadonga 722–2022.: Las huellas y los relatos* (Oviedo, 2023) pp.87–105
Hoffmann, D., ‘Die spätrömischen Soldatengrabschriften von Concordia’, in *Museum Helveticum: schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft,* Band 20, Heft 1 (1963) pp.22–57
Ishaev, V.A., ‘An early piece of East European Mediaeval protective armour excavated in Krasnodar Territory’, in КСИА. Вып. 228 (Moscow, 2013) pp.191–197
Kazanski, M., *Les Goths, Ier-VIIe siècles après J.–C*. (Paris, 1991)
Kazanski, M., ‘Les casques du type Baldenheim en Europe orientale: les origines’, in Kazanski, M. & Perin, P., Autour de règne de Clovis, Les grands dans l’Europe des Haut Moyen Âge; XXXIIe Journées de l’Association française d’archéologie mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, April 2011) pp.320–329

Kazanski, M., ‘Barbarian Military Equipment and its Evolution in the Late Roman and Great Migration Periods (3rd–5th C AD)’, in Sarantis, A. & Christie, N., *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity* (Leiden & Boston, 2013) pp. 493–522
Kazanski, M., ‘Justinian I and the antiquities of Italian Ostrogoths in the Crimea’, in *Materials in Archaeology and History of Ancient and Medieval Crimea,* 10 (2018) pp. 211–220
Kazanski, M., ‘Prestigious finds and Post-Hunnic Centres of Power in Dnieper Region’, in Sharov, O.V., *Terra Barbarica and Non-Roman Elite – Stratum plus* (4, 2018) pp. 83–118
Kazanski, M., ‘Les mors de cheval à décor zoomorphe de l’époque des Grandes Migrations’ in *Association française d’archéologie mérovingienne* (*Musée d’Archéologie nationale;* Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2019)
Kazanski, M. & Vallet, F., (eds.) L’Armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle (Paris, 1993)
Kazanski, M. & Vallet, F., (eds.) *La noblesse Romaine et les chefs barbares* (Paris, 1995)
Kokowski, A., ‘The military art of the Goths in the Late Roman period (according to archaeological data)’, in Kazanski, M. & Vallet, F. (eds.) *L’Armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993) pp. 335–354
Kontny B., ‘Breves gladii et rotunda scuta. Remarks on the Goths’ weapons in the margin of Tacitus’ text’, in Carnap-Bornheim, C. von, et al. (eds.), *Germania-Sarmatia I: 180–209 (Museum fur Geschichte und Kunst, Kaliningrad; Staatliches Archaologisches Museum*, *Kursk)* (Kaliningrad, 2008)
Kulikowski, M., *Rome’s Gothic Wars* (Cambridge, 2007)
Lebedynsky, I., *Armes et guerriers barbares au temps des grandes invasions* (Paris, 2001)
López Quiroga, J. & Catalán Ramos, R., ‘El registro arqueológico del “equipamiento militar” en Hispania durante la Antigüedad tardía’, in *Zona Arqueológica,* 11 (Madrid: Museo Arqueológico Regional; 2008) pp. 418–434
Lusuardi Siena, S., et al, ‘Gli elmi tardo-antichi (IV–VI sec.) alla luce delle fonti letterarie, numismatiche ed archeologiche: alcune

considerazioni', in Buora, M., *Miles Romanus, Dal Po al Danubio nel Tardoantico* (Pordenone, 2002) pp. 21–62
Malyshev, A.A. (ed.), Durso Burial Ground: catalogue Part I (Moscow, 2021)
Maspero, V., La corona ferrea: la storia del piú antico e celebre simbolo del potere in Europa (Monza, 2003/ 2008)
Miks, C., ‚Relikte eines frühmittelalterlichen Oberschichtgrabes?', in *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz,* 56, (2009) pp. 395–538
Muñoz, R., El ejército visigodo: desde sus origenes a la Batalla de Guadalete (Madrid, 2003)
Nefedkin, A.K., 'Weaponry of the Goths of the mid-3rd to the 7th century AD', in Kocsis, L., *The Enemies of Rome. Proceedings of the 15th International Roman Military Equipment Conference, Budapest, Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies (JRMES)*, Vol. 16 (2008), pp.147–156
Odobescu, A., Le trésor de Petrossa, Historique – description, 4 vols. (Paris, 1889–1900)
Peruffo, A., *Storia Militare dei Goti, da Teodorico a Totila* (Rome, 2012)
Pollak, M., 'Ein gallo-fränkischer Offizier in Alpenraum? Neues zu Amtsträger der Straßenstation Iuenna/Globasnitz', in *Carinthia I: Mittheilungen des Geschichtsvereins für Kärnten* (January 2021) pp. 91–119
Post, P., 'Der kupferne Spangenhelm', in *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission,* 34 (1953) pp. 115–150
Rébé, I., Raynaud, C. & Sénac, P., Le premier Moyen Âge à Ruscino... entre Septimanie et al-Andalus, Viie-iXe s. (Lattes, 2014)
Reinhart, W., 'Germanische Helme in westgotishen Münzbildern', in *Zahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*, 2 (1950–55), pp. 43–46
Ruchesi, F., 'Military Matters in the Visigothic Kingdom: initial consideration' in *Visigothic Symposium* (Madrid, 2018–19) pp.72–87
Sánchez Velasco, J., 'The Late Antiquity Sarcophagus from Almovodar Old Road (or the Limits of Iconography)' in *Revista de Prehistoria y Arqueologia de la Universidad de Sevilla*, 17 (2008) pp. 335–347

Schmölzer, A., *Völkerwanderungszeitliche Grabfunde mit künstlicher Schädeldeformation* (Graz, 2015)
Shchukin, M.B., Kazanski, M. & Sharov, O., *Des Goths et Huns. Le Nord de la mer Noire au Bas-Empire et à l'époque de Grandes Migrations* (Oxford, 2006)
Shinakov, E., Popov, S., & Fedosov, A., 'An Archaeological Assemblage with a Spangenhelm from South-West Russia', in *Acta Militaria Mediaevalia, XIII* (Kraków – Sanok – Wrocław; 2017) pp. 111–124
Skalon, K.M., 'Der Helm von Concesti, Rumanien', in Klumbach, H., *Spätromische Gardehelme* (Munich, 1973) pp. 91–94
Sivan, H., 'On Foederati, Hospitalitas, and the settlement of the Goths in AD 418' in *American Journal of Philology*, 108 (1987) pp. 759–772
Speidel, M.P., 'The Rise of Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (ANRW*)* II.3 (1975) pp. 201–231
Speidel, M.P., 'The Roman Army in Arabia', in *ANRW II.8* (1977) pp. 687–730
Spier, G., *Treasures of the Ferrell Collection* (Wiesbaden, 2010)
Strassmeir, A., *Das Fränkische Heer der Merowingerzeit, Teils I und II* (Berlin, 2014)
Vida, T., *Romania Gothica II: The Frontier World, Romans, Barbarians and Military Culture* (Budapest, 2015)
Vogt, M., *Spangenhelme* (Darmstadt, 2006)
Werner, J., 'Nuovi dati sulle origini degli spangen-helme alto-medioevali del tipo Baldenheim', in *XXXVI Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina, 'Ravenna e l'Italia fra Goti e Longobardi'* (Ravenna, 1989)
Wolfram, H., *History of the Goths* (London, 1988)
Wolfram, H., Die Goten, *Von den Anfangen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (Munich, 1990)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

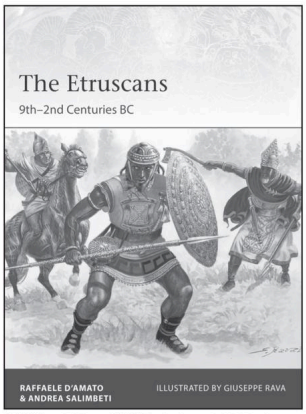
Ραφφαελε Δ'Αματο, ΠηΔ, ισ τηε αυτηορ οφ μορε τηαν 40 βοοκσ ανδ ηασ ωριττεν νυμερουσ αρτιχλεσ ον τηε Ρομαν Εμπιρε, Βψζαντιυμ, μεδιεϖαλ Ευροπε ανδ τηε μιλιταρψ οφ Ανχιεντ Γρεεχε. Ηε ηασ ταυγητ ατ τηε Υνιϖερσιτψ οφ Φερραρα, ανδ ωασ α ϖισιτινγ προφεσσορ ατ Φατιη Υνιϖερσιτψ, Ιστανβυλ. Ηε χυρρεντλψ λιϖεσ ιν Ενγλανδ.

Ανδρεα Σαλιμβετι ηασ ηαδ α λιφελονγ ιντερεστ ιν ανχιεντ μιλιταρψ ηιστορψ, παρτιχυλαρλψ τηε Βρονζε Αγε ιν Γρεεχε ανδ τηε Μιδδλε Εαστ, ανδ ηασ χολλαβορατεδ ωιτη μαγαζινεσ ανδ πυβλιχατιονσ εξπλορινγ τηεσε τοπιχσ. Ηε αλσο ωριτεσ ον αϖιατιον τοπιχσ συχη ασ αεροσπαχε τεχηνολογψ ανδ φλιγητ εθυιπμεντ. Ηε ηασ χοντριβυτεδ το ϖαριουσ Οσπρεψ τιτλεσ.

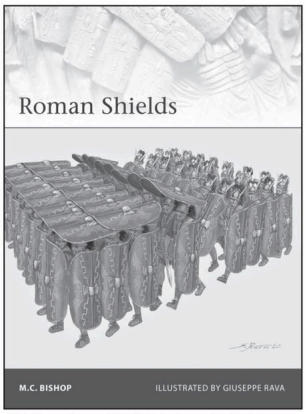
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Μαρεκ Σζψσζκο λιϖεσ ανδ ωορκσ ιν ηισ ηομετοων οφ Ωαρσαω, ωηερε ηε γραδυατεδ φρομ τηε Αχαδεμψ οφ Φινε Αρτσ ωιτη α μαστερ'σ δεγρεε ιν γραπηιχ αρτσ ιν 1976. Υντιλ 1990, ηε ωορκεδ ασ α χομιχ στριπ αρτιστ, ανδ ωασ αμονγ τηοσε ρεπρεσεντινγ Πολανδ ατ τηε Βανδε Δεσιγν⌈ε φεστιϖαλ ατ Σερρε, Σωιτζερλανδ, ιν 1988. Σινχε τηεν, ηε ηασ χονχεντρατεδ ον ιλλυστρατιον, παρτιχυλαρλψ οφ ηιστοριχαλ συβφεχτσ, φορ μαγαζινεσ, βοοκσ ανδ βοαρδ γαμεσ. Ηισ ωορκ χαν βε φουνδ ον ηισ ωεβσιτε, μαρεκσζψσζκο.χομ.

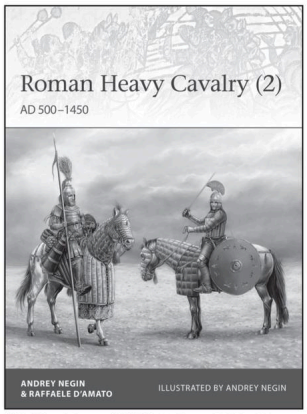
Other titles in the series



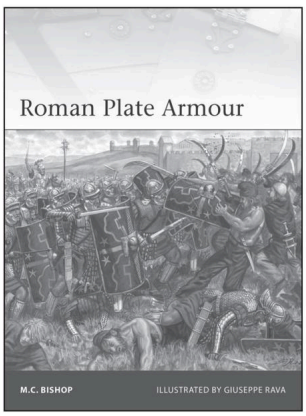
ELI No: 223 • **ISBN:** 9781472828316



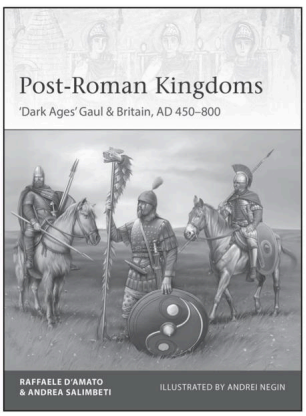
ELI No: 234 • **ISBN:** 9781472839626



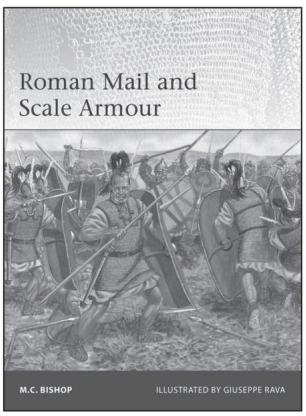
ELI No: 235 • **ISBN:** 9781472839503



ELI No: 247 • **ISBN:** 9781472851871

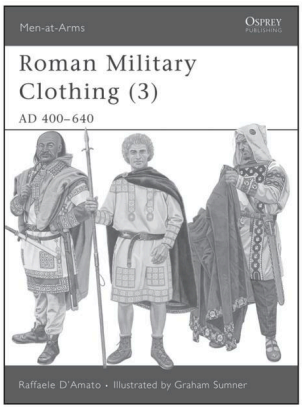


ELI No: 248 • **ISBN:** 9781472850980

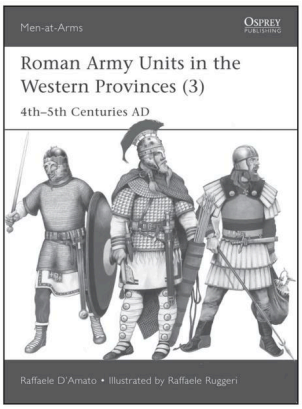


ELI No: 252 • **ISBN:** 9781472851703

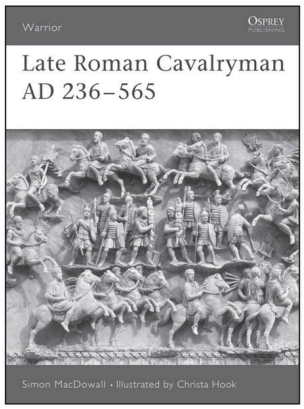
Discover more at www.ospreypublishing.com



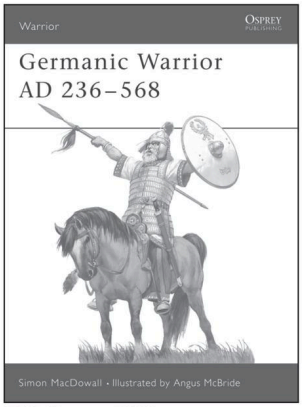
MAA No: 425 • **ISBN:** 9781841768434



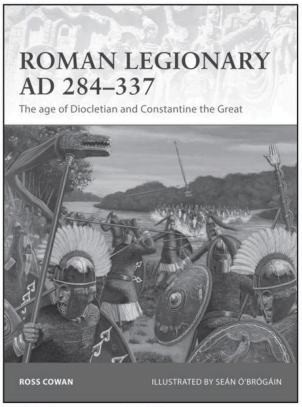
MAA No: 557 • **ISBN:** 9781472862686



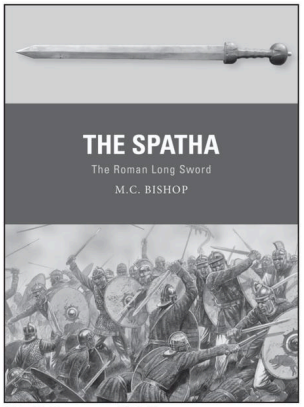
WAR No: 15 • **ISBN:** 9781855325678



WAR No: 17 • **ISBN:** 9781855325869



WAR No: 175 • **ISBN:** 9781472806666



WPN No: 72 • **ISBN:** 9781472832399

OSPREY PUBLISHING
Bloomsbury Publishing plc
Kemp House, Chawley Park, Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9PH, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland
1385 Broadway, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: **info@ospreypublishing.com**
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd
First published in Great Britain in 2025
This electronic edition published in 2025 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

© Osprey Publishing Ltd 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

PB ISBN: 9781472863065
eBook ISBN: 9781472863072
ePDF ISBN: 9781472863096
XML ISBN: 9781472863089

Editor: Martin Windrow
Typeset by PDQ Digital Solutions, Bungay, UK

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

To find out more about our authors and books visit **www.ospreypublishing.com**. Here you will find our full range of publications, as well as exclusive online content, details of forthcoming

events and the option to sign up for our newsletters. You can also sign up for Osprey membership, which entitles you to a discount on purchases made through the Osprey site and access to our extensive online image archive.

Acknowledgements

This book, drawing upon archaeological finds from all over Europe, has required the collaboration of friends, colleagues and museums in several countries, to all of whom we express our sincere gratitude. Important material was furnished from the collection of James Ferrell; and from the Ruscino depot in ancient Septimania, by Drs Laurent Savarese and Elisabeth Doumeyrou (Direction du patrimoine historique et de l'archéologie, ville de Perpignan). It is an honour and a pleasure to thank Prof Michael Kazanski, of the Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance (CNRS) in Paris for his contributions to our iconography. The wonderful finds from Globasnitz are published thanks to the courtesy of Drs Franz Glaser and Marianne Pollak. In Spain, we express our gratitude to Dr Manuel Aguayo, Conservador de Museos & Asesor Técnico de Conservación e Investigación of the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, for the photo of the sarcophagus of Camino Vejo de Almodovar; to Dr Alberto González Alonso, of the Museo de San Isidro, Madrid, for kindly providing material on the Daganzo finds; to Dr Jose Angel Hierro Garate of the Mauranus Proyecto, for photos of finds from Soto de Real; and to Dr Rafael Hidalgo Prieto for the rare and important photo of the mould from Cercadilla.

For photographic assistance we must also thank the following museums and institutions: the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Timeline Auctions; the Louvre, Paris; the Museum of Numantia; the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid; the Museums of Palazzo Altemps and Palazzo Massimo, and the DAI Library, all in Rome; the Archaeological Museum, Ravenna; the Palazzo Mazzolani, Faenza; the Bargello and Stibbert Museums, Florence; the Museo Civico, Alessandria; the Museo Castelvecchio, Verona; the Collezione Torlonia of Antichitá del Fucino, Museum of Celano Castle; the Civiche Raccolte Archeologiche e Numismatiche, Milan; the Domschatz Cathedral Museum, Halberstadt; the Deutsches Historisches Museum,

Berlin; the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and the Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg, Russian Federation.
The graphic and computer development of images are the result of the hard work of Dr Giorgio Albertini, Dr Marco Saliola and Flavio Olivieri, to whom the authors are most grateful. The colour reconstruction plates in this book were particularly challenging, and we are deeply in debt to the talent (and great patience) of Marek Szyszko.
Raffaele D'Amato & Andrea Salimbeti

Editor's note

For reasons of space, and the repeated changes to the subdivisions and boundaries of Late Roman provinces, we have been unable to provide maps in this text. Readers are referred to the basic map of the Empire in *c.*AD 117 on page 7 of MAA 527, *Roman Army Units in the Western Provinces (2): 3rd Century AD*, and are otherwise advised to consult on-line sources.

Artist's note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the coloured plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:
marek1szyszko@gmail.com

Title page photo

Carving of 3rd-century Gothic cavalryman on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus. Note the lack of armour, the 'Phrygian' cap, and the short Roman *semi-spatha* sword. (Museum of Palazzo Altemps, Rome; photo Raffaele D'Amato, courtesy of the Museum)